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New York Tennis Magazine

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Dominant Djokovic

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Photo credit:Simon Bruty/USTA

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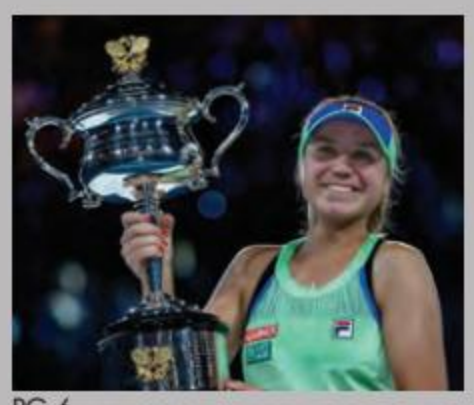
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Across Metro N

Mills Wins L6 Tournament

Chantajah Mills,who trains at The Cary Leeds Center for Tennis & Learning has excelled in tournament play recently as she captured the title at the L5 November Cary Leeds Championships in the Girls 16s Division, and followed it up the next month by capturing the title in the L5 JMTA Christmas Classic.

Epstein Reaches L6 December Open Finals

Oliver Epstein powered his way to the finals of the L6 December Open at Ross School Tennis Academy, competing in the Boys' 16 division. Epstein, who trains at Gilad Bloom Tennis, aims to carry the good momentum from that tournament into the new year.

Centercourt's Sinha Commits to Cornell

Adit Sinha, a member of Centercourt's Performance Tennis Academy, made his collegiate decision as the senior announced his commitment to play at Cornell University starting in the Fall of 2021.

RSTA's Dangin Wins 10U Tourney

Lola Dangin, a player in the Ross School Tennis Academy, won the title at the Girls 10U Orange Ball event, winning three consecutive matches en route to the championship on her home courts at the RSTA in East Hampton.

New York

... News and notes from across the N.Y. Metro tennis community

Cotoulas Wins NTC Men's Open Title

Ari Cotoulas of the John McEnroe Tennis Academy was crowned champion of the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center Men's Open, winning five straight matches to claim the title. Cotoulas took out four straight seeded players, and came back from a set down in both his semifinal and finals matches.

Cotoulas told JMTA social media: "It was an amazing way to end the year. I competed against a bunch of great Division 1 college players, and had to play at a high level over the course of a week instead of a weekend. I was really proud of my play and how I battled for every match. I had to raise my level and ended up 'clutching' out the final match in a super tie-breaker."

MatchPoint's Vustsina Wins L4 Sectional Championship

Agnia Vustsina lived up to her billing as the top-seed at the L4 New Eastern Sectional Championship at Westchester Tennis Center. Vustsina, who trains at MatchPoint NYC in Brooklyn, won all of her matches in straight sets en route to the finals before pulling out a 6-4, 5-7, 12-10 victory in the championship match.

Idnani Captures Title on Home Courts

Balraj Idnan, a player in the CourtSense Tennis Training Center program, won a tournament at his home club, winning the Boys 14s title at the L5 CourtSense Championships at Bogota Racquet Club. As the top-see, Idnani won all of his matches in straight sets.

NY Tennis Club Members Play Holiday Tennis

It's important to remain active during the holiday season,

and several members of New York Tennis Club made sure to do just that, getting together on Christmas Eve to compete in some mixed doubles play.

2021 Australian Open PREVIEW

Photos courtesy of USTA

The 2021 Grand Slam season in professional tennis will begin, as it normally does each year, in Melbourne with the Australian Open, but this edition of the tournament Down Under will present a far different scenario than previous years.

For starters, the 2021 Australian Open will not be played in January, instead beginning on February 8. Players will be required to quarantine for 14 days upon arriving in Melbourne, meaning the qualifying rounds will be played in Doha, Qatar for the ATP Tour and Dubai, United Arab Emirates for the WTA Tour.

In between the qualifying rounds and the start of the Australian Open, there will be 250-level tournaments held in Melbourne for both the men's and women's tours, which will lead in to the commencement of the year's first Grand Slam.

Once the players get acclimated and the tournament gets underway, the attention will turn to the play between the white lines. The defending champions on each respective side enter the event with far different career resumes, as American Sofia Kenin won her first major last year when she defeated Garbine Muguruza to hoist the Aussie trophy, while Serbia's Novak Djokovic outlasted Dominic Thiem in a five-set thriller to win his second straight and eighth Australian Open overall.

"This tournament sets a high standard for all the other tournaments around the world and it's definitely my favorite court, my favorite stadium in the world," said Djokovic. "I'm blessed to hold this trophy once again."

The win was the beginning of what was an historic start to the season for Djokovic, who carried an undefeated record all the way late into the summer before being infamously defaulted at the U.S. Open. Djokovic will be the tournament's clear favorite in 2021 as he seeks his third straight title in Oz.

On the flip side, the loss only added fuel to the fire for Thiem, the Austrian native who continued to come up short in Grand Slam finals. But those tough experiences would pay off in the long run as later in the year, at the aforementioned U.S. Open, Thiem defeated Alexander Zverev in a five-set match to win his first career title.

"It was tough to stay there and to still believe, but I did," said Thiem. "It's a Slam final...the belief was always there."

While Thiem would falter in the French Open quarterfinals, a long layoff in the winter could refuel him for a deep run in Melbourne where he will seek a return to the Australian Open final.

Speaking of belief, few players on either tour possess more confidence in their own abilities than Kenin, who is soft-spoken off the court but carries a huge game on it. Following her title a year ago, Kenin would go on to have the best year of her career which included a run to the French Open finals and ultimately winning WTA's Player of the Year.

"This is such an honor," she said afterwards. "I'm so proud of myself, my dad, my team, everyone that has been around me. We've all worked hard. We've been through tough times. We did it. We fought. I'm just on cloud nine."

Now Kenin is the event's defending champion, and like Thiem, a long layoff in the offseason should provide a healthy and rested Kenin, which does not bode well for the rest of the field. The American should be considered one of the tournament's favorites.

The New Year also brings with it excitement of possible breakout stars to emerge. Kenin's opponent in the French Open, Poland's Iga Swiatek, still just a teenager, will look to build off of her tremendous victory at Roland Garros as she transitions from clay to hard courts. She reached the fourth round at the Australian Open this time last year, and with Grand Slam experience now in her possession, Swiatek looks to be a force on the tour, and most notably at the major events.

One player to look out for on the men's side is Brandon Nakashima, another teenager who put together a solid year in 2020. He reached the quarterfinals at Delray Beach and the semifinals at the Indian Wells Challenger. Most recently, he won five straight matches at the Orlando Challenger en route to the title. A fan of playing on hard courts, Nakashima could be due for a run in Melbourne, and will certainly be a tough out for whomever he encounters in the draw.

The Australian Open will give fans a fascinating look into what the sport of tennis may look like in 2021 and beyond. An important factor will be how players adjust to the "bubble" like set up, and if the tournament can be held without any positive cases or breaches in protocols. The later start date, while it interferes with the schedule for the rest of the year on both tours, allows organizers to set up a safe environment for players and staff, and the goal is to have the majority of the conversation around the tournament focused on tennis, and not COVID-19.

New York Tennis Magazine's Contenders, Pretenders and Sleepers

Contenders

Novak Djokovic

The two-time defending champion is owner of eight Australian Open titles overall, and is coming off of a dominating 2020 season. While the season would end with losses at the U.S. Open and French Open, Djokovic is the world's best hard-court player and will be more motivated than ever as we enter 2021.

Alexander Zverev

Just a few points away from being a Grand Slam champion, Alexander Zverev came up just short in the U.S. Open finals a few months ago. Instead, the young German

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is still searching for his first major title. An excellent hard court player with the type of power that can help him topple any opponent, Zverev will look to build off his first Grand Slam final appearance and try to go one match further this time around.

Simona Halep
It was a bit of a quiet year for Romania's Simona Halep, who opted not to travel to the United States for the Western & Southern and U.S. Opens. She returned when the tours moved back to Europe, and she lost to eventual champion Iga Swiatek in the French Open Round of 16. Owner of two Grand Slam titles (one on clay and one on grass), Halep could be due for her first hard-court Grand Slam victory.

Sofia Kenin
The defending champion, Sofia Kenin proved to the world in 2020 that she has the chops to perform on the biggest stage. Kenin won her first Grand Slam in Melbourne, and concluded the year by reaching the French Open finals. With more pressure on her this year, don't look for Kenin to falter underneath it, but instead embrace the challenge as she aims to repeat as champion.

Pretenders

Gael Monfils

One of the flashiest and most enjoyable players to watch on tour, Gael Monfils is always must-see television. However, his game translates much better to the clay, and Monfils has never been able to maintain consistency for the two-week long Grand Slams. His best showing at the Australian Open was a quarterfinal appearance in 2016, which will be hard to duplicate in 2021.

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Claire An (Grade 8)
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Daniil Medvedev
Daniil Medvedev has been one of the best players on tour over the last couple of years, but has yet to find success at the Australian Open. Despite being a premier hard-court player, and one who is currently ranked fourth, Medvedev has failed to make it out of the fourth round in Melbourne in his career, and could struggle to do so again this year.

Serena Williams
The greatest player of all-time has not performed her best at the Grand Slams in recent years. She is a seven-time champion Down Under, but failed to make it out of the third-round last year, and with another year gone, Serena may struggle to reach the second week of the 2021 Australian Open.

Ashleigh Barty
The top-ranked woman in the world may feel a bit of added pressure competing in her home country of Australia. She did reach the semifinals last year, before falling to Kenin, but lacks the type of power that wins on hard courts, and therefore may not be able to repeat that performance this time around.

Sleepers
Grigor Dimitrov
Once considered a phenom, Grigor Dimitrov will turn 30 in 2021, and could be due for the biggest season of his career. He has been successful at the Australian Open in the past, and has the type of game that could dominate on hard courts. Dimitrov has gone through a number of coaches through the past couple of years, but, now a veteran, Dimitrov has the experience and game to make a deep run Down Under.

Denis Shapovalov
The flashy lefty is one of the most intriguing players on the men's tour. Shapovalov is coming off a quarterfinal showing at the U.S. Open in 2020, and will aim to carry that success across the world to Australia where he is a real threat to make a deep run at the title.

Elina Svitolina

One could make the argument that Elina Svitolina is the most accomplished player on the women's tour without a Grand Slam title to her name. The Ukrainian is a mainstay in the Top 10 and has reached two major semifinals, but expect that to change in 2021. Svitolina has the game and confidence to beat anyone on tour, and could very well breakthrough when the women's tour returns in Australia in 2021.

Jennifer Brady
The big-hitting American burst onto the scene in 2020 as she reached the semifinals of the U.S. Open. Few players strike the ball harder than Brady, the former UCLA standout, and the fast courts in Melbourne suit her game perfectly. With Grand Slam experience under her belt, Brady should be considered one of the favorites at this year's Australian Open, so don't be surprised if she advances deep into the tournament.

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JensenZone

By Luke Jensen

Goodbye 2020, Hello 2021

Hey winners!

In a sideways year that has been 2020, I am extremely confident that 2021 can provide some of our finest moments.

I am so proud to be part of the global tennis community, and an extraordinary high-five goes out to the USTA for shining a light on the advantages of tennis as a socially distant activity. There was so much done by very smart and high-character people to keep the rally going in the world of tennis during this pandemic. On the pro side, it's amazing to see these world-class players deal with pressures beyond simply losing a match, such as the different bubbles and travel restrictions.

I know the Australian Open will be a real challenge for players who will have to quarantine after traveling from all parts of the planet. Will there be any chance to hit balls or work out in that time? To roll into the first major of the calendar year with a two-week quarantine will challenge even the toughest-minded players.

My 2020 players of the year are Sofia Kenin and Rafael Nadal! Sofia is one of my favorite pro ballers, and after winning her first major at the Aussie Open in the beginning of the year she never missed a beat. Competing and training during the lockdown led to a wonderful World TeamTennis season as she anchored the Philadelphia Freedoms into the playoffs. She reached the Round of 16 at the U.S. Open and the finals of the French Open. The WTA has her ranked fourth in the year-end rankings, but to me that is wrong! I think COVID must have infected the WTA computer system because Ashleigh Barty is number one, and she played only four events and even lost to Kenin in Melbourne. It gets better…2019 U.S. Open Champion Bianca Andreescu ends up seventh and she didn't play a single match! The amount of ranking bonus money in those contracts is crazy good and Kenin was robbed of the end-of-the-year top spot.

Rafa winning his 13th French Open and 20th major overall, tying Roger Federer for most singles majors on the men's side, is just unbelievable. The way Rafa instills a laser-like focus from practice swing to match point sets him apart from anyone who has ever picked up a racquet. My hope is that Fed comes back strong in 2021, and even Serena at 23 major titles, feels the heat as Rafa and Fed aim to close the gap even further for the title of greatest of all-time.

All I know is that I'm so happy to be done with 2020 and ready to hit aces in 2021.

I hope to see you all hitting winners and having fun..... GO FOR IT!!

Born in Grayling, Mich., Luke Jensen's resume includes 10 ATP Tour doubles titles and singles victories against Andre Agassi, Pete Sampras, Ivan Lendl, John McEnroe, Bjorn Borg, Jimmy Connors, Boris Becker, Stefan Edberg and Jim Courier. Jensen and his brother, Murphy, won the 1993 French Open doubles title. Luke is currently director of tennis at Sea Island Tennis Center in Georgia. He may be reached by phone at (315) 443-3552 or e-mail lukejensen84@yahoo.com.

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A Big Decision: Selecting Your Child's First Tennis Coach

The importance of consistency through the developmental years

By Adam Borr & Conrad Singh

For many parents today, selecting the right coach is a huge and crucial decision with numerous considerations. The real key component to ask is regarding the amount of 'care' that the coach offers your child. Care encompasses so many key factors such as creating a dynamic environment, technical knowledge, communicational skills and, of course, taking the time to develop a strong relationship. These qualities are of the utmost importance.

Many of the strongest players today are fortunate to have made the right choices and found a very good coach in the early development stages. We know that the trajectory of a player is often hindered or enhanced by the quality of the first coach, which is another reason this decision is so critical.

It is then no secret why many of the strongest players at local tournaments have a parent as a coach or at least as a support to the coach. Time spent on court with your coach is often difficult to find but is golden for the player. Parents who have the ability and time are able to develop terrific bonds and communication with their children whilst at the same time implementing years of understanding in the home environment into use. They often understand best how their child learns and can fast-track this learning by teaming up with the coach.

If you have the good fortune of knowing the sport as a parent, you can do so much that a coach often is unable to. However the issue arises then when a parent does not have this knowledge and experience or formal training. The steps to developing a player are complicated and as with most top chefs—timing and quantity of the ingredients is more important to the end goal than the content itself. In this case it is important to find a coach that is prepared to work with the parent and the player, creating that all essential triangle of success.

When you ask a player at the end of their days on court, many will recall clearly the first days with their coach who helped to develop and harness their passion for the game. The hours spent perfecting a child's game is precious and many of the reasons why they continue to pursue the sport is because of those initial experiences.

This means that kids whose parents also coach them are very fortunate as they often have endless resources and access to their tennis encyclopedia whenever they wanted. Kids who are passionate about the game often want to constantly work at it and even at 10-years-old are aware that a parent as coach who can assist is a huge advantage.

Another major factor which drives players is the ability to play tennis constantly without time restrictions—which is a reason why finding a tennis club to become a member of will certainly always guide raw talent in the right pathway.

Other key considerations are that a development philosophy must include private instruction and practice opportunities with players of like-minded interest at clinics and competitions at the earliest stages to drive the need for continuous learning. Parents often play a critical role in the practice and competitive piece of their child's tennis, as time spent with their child ultimately cements the bond and experiences.

Just look at some of the best players in the world and of all-time such as Coco Gauff, Martina Hingis, Jimmy Connors, Chris Evert, Roger Federer, Andy Murray, Andre Agassi, Steffi Graf, Rafael Nadal and the list goes on and on. The evidence shows that these players had advantage over their opponents because of their close relationship with their coaches and parents.

Of course, not every parent has the time or knowledge to dedicate this type of attention to their child's tennis

game. If you are looking for a coach to take your player through multiple stages of development, these criteria are essential:

- Passion: Your coach should have passion for tennis and love to inspire others to reach all levels of their potential.
- Knowledge, Experience and Current Qualifications: Your coach should have years of teaching experience in developing strong players at all stages of the developmental pathway. Being a certified, qualified and current member of a recognized association is also important as the game is always changing.
- Competition: Your coach should be a part of a larger organization or successful club. This allows your child to be a part of a competitive environment where coaches and players are all pushing each other to achieve their greatest potential.
- Positive role model: No matter how much of a good coach your prospect is, let's not lose perspective here. Our kids need to be around good people and adults that we as parents also trust.
- Motivation: Your child's coach should have no problem getting your player to go through any number of skill-building activities with passion and excitement. The key here is dynamic teaching systems and overall communication

Every child's coach should have a clear pathway of progressions to guide your player. Tennis is a game that is played and developed all over the world and often coached differently at clubs in the same town. Trusting the process is a critical aspect to your child's development. Children learn, progress and, most essentially, understand the game at different rates and times, which is why knowing your child is also essential. Factoring in the various learning styles and using different tools to assist the growth process is important for the coach and this will usually derive from a close relationship between the parents and coach.

The coach needs a clear philosophy and an understanding of the pathway ahead. If they display commitment to the process of your child's development and future success, both on and off the court, you are in good hands.

Conrad Singh is the Chief Operating Officer of Tennis & Director of Coaching at Centercourt Club & Sports. He has held Head Coach and Director positions in Australia, England, Japan and China, and has been involved in professional tennis player development for well over two decades. Coach Adam Borr is a PTR Professional with decades in the industry and is the Orange Ball Lead Coach at Centercourt Tennis Academy. He has vast experience in developing the key skills for young players and has lived the pathway with his own children, helping to take them to the top of the game nationally.

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By Brian Coleman

with Jennifer Brown, Midtown Tennis

New York City, and Manhattan in particular, is known for its seemingly endless amount of things to do and places to see. When it comes to tennis, players have the luxury of playing on some of the country's most historic courts, and perhaps none more premier and with richer history than Midtown Tennis Club.

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"I play tennis, as frequently as possible, at Midtown Tennis Club," said Howard Schatz. "The club has well-maintained courts and is a welcoming, well-cared for and wonderful facility. The staff is efficient and generous, and now, during the COVID-19 pandemic, maintains impressive safety for all its tennis players, pros and workers. The pros are terrific, patient, kind and helpful. I feel really lucky to be able to play tennis at this exceptional club."

Located on 8th Avenue, between 26th and 27th Streets in Midtown, just a short walk from Penn Station, Midtown Tennis Club has been in operation since the mid-60s, when Luke Sapan, a successful businessman and Benjamin Lieberman, a dentist, teamed to launch the facility more than five decades ago. A few years later, in 1969, it was sold to an industrial company under which it has operated ever since, and remains an indoor/outdoor facility open to the public.

"The Club thrives without a membership. Our biggest attraction is that anyone can play here," said Jennifer Brown, the Director at Midtown Tennis Club. "Anyone can rent a court, take a private lesson,

participate in a group class, enroll in our Junior program, or join our Round Robin on Friday nights. All you need to visit the Club is a reservation. All ages, all levels, all price points. If you want to play regularly, now and then, when you are in town visiting, or only on weekends, we have an option for every tennis player's needs."

Brown has been working at Midtown since 1992, and got her start in the tennis industry while still in high school when she served as an assistant tennis pro at a private club in New Jersey.

"I taught lessons to children, maintained the clay tennis courts, arranged matches and operated the retail shop," she recalls. "I loved tennis from an early age and it came very naturally to me. I played high school tennis and then moved on to Ithaca College where I played on the team and earned a degree in Sport Management."

Some of the first players at Midtown Tennis Club in Manhattan in 1965

She moved to New York City after college, and began playing with her brother at Midtown after work.

"We really fell in love with the Club. It was very friendly and comfortable, and of course we loved

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An Ariel view of Midtown Tennis Club in the New York City skyline

the Har-Tru courts," she said. "I was interviewing for jobs and my brother suggested that I look into Midtown for a part-time job until I found a full-time gig. There was an opening at the front desk and I started there in November of 1992. I started out as a receptionist, and soon took over the junior and adult programs, and then became the weekend manager and bookkeeper. Finally, after much seasoning, I rose through the ranks to become Director. It is truly the dream job of a tennis player."

Midtown possesses a welcoming environment which has made players feel at home.

"Playing at Midtown Tennis Club is like being part of a family club," said Robert Berg. "It provides a small town club experience in the big city. My family has been playing there for over 40 years, from my father's weekly tennis game that I inherited and still going, to my two sons who learned to play tennis there. We are grateful for the warm and welcoming environment that stems from the helpfulness of the staff, the friendly, insightful pros, and the patience of the long-standing players to the occasional on-court meltdown."

"Midtown's goal is to provide our juniors with tennis skills, sportsmanship and knowledge of the game that they will sustain throughout their lives"

Rachel Brown, an avid Midtown player, added:

"I have enjoyed playing at Midtown Tennis Club for over a decade. The pros are phenomenal, the facilities are well-maintained and the location in Chelsea makes it the perfect place to play."

For all of those reasons, Midtown is frequented by recreational players as well as all kinds of celebrities.

"We get to know our customers, their families, the pros they favor and the particular court numbers they like best," said Jennifer Brown. "We get to see them become better tennis players and fall in love with the sport.

We also get our fair share of celebrity sightings. Over the years we have hosted numerous professional

athletes, actors, models, fashion executives, top chefs and more. The late Arthur Ashe, David Dinkins, Mike Wallace and Kurt Vonnegut have all graced our courts."

Vonnegut, the famous author, wrote glowingly in an essay about Midtown's Court #2, which he called "The Most Beautiful Court in the World." In it, he discusses his affection for the court, the strategy of playing on it, and the community of players he was able to join.

"We're a fairly tight group," he writes. "Most of us realized that these, our tennis companions, are our main friends, and none of us would have much in the way of friendships if it weren't for the tennis group."

In addition to famous players gracing the courts, Midtown has been seen on television and other media, including a photo shoot for the cover of the Wheaties cereal box with Pete Sampras in 2000, late New York Mets legend Tom Seaver pitching across the tennis courts to reporters, and most recently on the season finale of the Real Housewives of New York.

"The memories are endless. Midtown is rich in history," Brown said.

Perhaps the Club's most unique attraction is its rooftop courts, which are open in the summer months and bubbled over in the winter. It's a "hidden gem", according to Brown, and provides spectacular views above Manhattan while you play tennis on the beautiful Har-Tru courts.

"Walking down 8th Avenue, just a few blocks from Madison Square Garden, you would never expect to see a tennis facility, especially a club with eight Har-Tru courts inside a city building or on the rooftop. People are amazed at their first visit. In the summer, we remove the bubble and the views from the roof are incredible. It feels like you are transported to a quieter, cleaner, less crowded, more beautiful part of the city. Our Adult Classes, run by A.B. Rosado, are held on the rooftop after

work and we have many sunset photos taken at the end of the lessons. The Empire State Building is to the Northeast and the Financial District to the South. In the late fall, we reinstall the bubble and play indoors. We are definitely a hidden oasis for tennis players in the heart of Manhattan."

While Midtown is a popular destination for adult players, it also houses a strong junior program.

"Midtown's goal is to provide our juniors with tennis skills, sportsmanship and knowledge of the game that they will sustain throughout their lives," said Brown. "During this difficult time of COVID-19, we have taken all the precautions to make the Club a safe and comfortable place for the kids to engage in sports and have fun. We offer mini-camps during the Winter and Spring vacations to keep up momentum during the weeks that the program breaks. We're looking forward to our first Summer Camp in 2021 as well as Parent-Child Doubles Tournaments."

Midtown truly offers something for everyone, which is part of the reason why it has sustained success for more than 50 years. Maintaining the welcoming environment combined with top-level instruction and friendly service, Midtown is excited for what the future holds as we enter 2021.

"As I enter my 29th year, I am still enamored with Midtown Tennis Club," said Brown. "If you haven't given our courts a try, I ask you to give us a 'shot'. Let our team help coordinate the right tennis experience for you and your family with one of the pros, a court time or a class."

Brian Coleman is the Senior Editor for *New York Tennis Magazine*. He may be reached at brianc@usptennis.com.

No Djoking Around

Novak Djokovic ready to continue dominance in 2021

By Brian Coleman

For the first eight months of 2020, Novak Djokovic was perfect on the tennis court, albeit under a reduced amount of match play due to the global pandemic. The 33-year-old Serb won his first 26 matches of the year, and to make the run even more impressive, he only lost nine sets during that stretch.

"I think this has been one of the best starts of all the seasons I had in my career," Djokovic said after winning the Dubai title early in the year. "I'm just grateful that I'm playing well, feeling well. I've won many matches now in a row. I'll try to keep that run going."

All in all, Djokovic won his 17th career Grand Slam title, at the Australian Open at the beginning of the year, scooped up three additional titles, and finished the season ranked in the world's top spot for the sixth time in his career.

Because of these accomplishments, Djokovic was named the ATP's Player of the Year.

"I will keep striving to be a better player, hopefully have more success and break more records in a sport I love with all my heart."

Despite the array of accolades, Djokovic's year was not without blemishes, however. During the summer, with the tours shut down to combat the COVID-19 global pandemic, Djokovic organized a series of exhibition matches called the Adria Tour, with events in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Croatia. There were hardly any safety protocols in place, and as a result a number of positive COVID-19 cases arose and the tour was forced to stop at its second stop.

While Djokovic's intentions for the tour were in the right place, it was a poor decision that was met with a lot of backlash.

"My intention was pure, I was wholeheartedly committed to organizing a

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Photo credit: Darren Carroll/USTA

no djoking around

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Photo credit: Darren Carroll/USTA

humanitarian event to help players and tennis federations in the [Balkan] region," he said. "We complied with all the laws and regulations. But we've learned our lesson and some things could have probably been done in a different way."

As the year shifted into the fall and attention turned to the New York bubble, that would house both the Western & Southern and U.S. Opens, Djokovic was slated as the clear favorite for both events. He would drop the first set to Milos Raonic in the finals of the Western & Southern Open, but rallied back to win the match and the title, and afterwards was asked about what wins like this do for his legacy.

"It's hard for me to talk about, you know, my legacy or my position in sport from that standpoint," said Djokovic. "Obviously, I am trying to make the most of my career, trying to use this time when I feel that I am physically, mentally, emotionally, game-wise at the peak I think and playing some of the best tennis that I have ever played…I'm just trying to enjoy it and embrace the process. How long that journey is going to last and what kind of legacy I'm going to leave behind, that's on somebody else to really judge and evaluate."

Unfortunately, a player's legacy encompasses more than wins or losses, and we would see that during the ensuing U.S. Open. During his match against Spain's Roberto Bautista-Agut, with a spot in the quarterfinals on the line, Djokovic hit a ball in frustration towards the back of the court after he lost a point. While he did not have this intention in mind, Djokovic's ball hit one the linespersons squarely in the throat and she immediately dropped to the ground.

He was subsequently defaulted from the match, ending his run at the U.S. Open and his undefeated record in the 2020 season.

In a statement afterwards, the USTA said:

"In accordance with the Grand Slam rulebook, following his actions of intentionally hitting a ball dangerously or recklessly within the court or hitting a ball with negligent disregard of the consequences, the US Open tournament referee defaulted Novak Djokovic from the 2020 US Open."

As a result, Djokovic forfeited the ranking points and prize money he had earned at the event up to that point. Later in the day, Djokovic took to social media and released a statement.

"This whole situation has left me really sad and empty. I checked on the lines person and the tournament told me that, thank God, she is feeling ok," he wrote. "I'm extremely sorry to have caused her such stress. So unintended. So wrong. I'm not disclosing her name to respect her privacy. As for the disqualification, I need to go back within and work on my disappointment and turn this all into a lesson for my growth and evolution as a player and human being."

Djokovic bounced back a couple of weeks later as the tour transitioned from hard courts to clay, and the Serb powered his way to the title in Rome, losing just one set in the process.

"I don't think I played my best tennis throughout the entire week, but I think I found my best tennis when I needed it the most, in the decisive moments," he said. "That makes me definitely very satisfied and proud."

He maintained his high level of play in Paris at the French Open; that was until he ran into the unstoppable force that is Rafael Nadal in the finals. Djokovic was taken apart, suffering the worst loss of his career, winning just seven games as Nadal won his 13th French Open trophy.

After a surprising defeat to Italian Lorenzo Sonega in Vienna, and dropping two matches at the ATP Finals in London, the end of the season was a tough one for Djokovic. Despite that, he still managed to finish the year with four

" I will keep striving to be a better player, hopefully have more success and break more records in a sport I love with all my heart. "

titles and an overall record of 41-5, which sets the stage for 2021.

Djokovic has much to play for in the coming season. He has held the top spot in the world rankings for 300 weeks in his career, and will be in pursuit of Roger Federer's record of 310 weeks as we begin the year. He needs to remain number one until March 9 of the new year to surpass Federer.

In his sights is a ninth Australian Open trophy overall, and his third straight title Down Under. He enters the tournament as the clear-cut favorite, as no player has posted the same level of dominance in Melbourne as Djokovic has.

"This tournament sets a high standard for all the other tournaments around the world and it's definitely my favorite court, my favorite stadium in the world," he said last year. "I'm blessed to hold this trophy once again."

With more records on his horizon and additional motivation following a disappointing end to the 2020 season, we could see an even more dominant Djokovic in 2021.

Brian Coleman is the Senior Editor for *New York Tennis Magazine*. He may be reached at brianc@usptennis.com.

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Should My Kid Play Up?

By Chris Lewit

It's a common question parents ask: "Should my kid play up?" The correct answer depends on the kid and depends on the situation. Over the years, I have studied with many different legendary coaches, who have differing views on the subject. Curiously, it seems the coaching world is a divided house on this issue. As an elite private and consultant coach myself, I'm often in the position of recommending tournament schedules and training plans to my clients, and this is a prominent question in our developmental planning.

It's helpful to understand that there are two main philosophical positions on separate ends of the spectrum—two camps, if you will—and it's also important to understand the difference between Training Up and Competing Up

.

Two Camps

- The "You Must Earn Your Way To The Next Level!" Camp
- Some parents and coaches adamantly believe that training and competing mainly with peers of similar level is the way to develop. They argue that nobody should be allowed to move up in practice or competition without systematically defeating all the players at their current level. In addition, they believe a healthy mix of practice and competition levels is better for development than primarily playing stronger kids.
- The "Faster Progress Is Made By Constantly Challenging Yourself Against Higher Level Players" Camp.

Other parents and coaches passionately argue that playing and training up is the fastest way to improve, by continually challenging a player with stronger opponents.

Training Up vs. Competing Up

Training Up means finding weekly practice groups with stronger players and/or scheduling private sparring partners with partners who are a higher skill level or UTR:

Positives

1. Hitting with stronger players regularly makes players stronger and girds them to handle pace and heavy spin.
2. Players typically play better against stronger players.
3. Stronger and older players usually don't hit as many moonballs or soft disruptive shots. They hit harder drives, which some parents and children appreciate. Players find they can get better rhythm with stronger consistent players.
4. It's often exhilarating and motivating to hit with stronger players.
5. Players can pick up good habits just be being exposed to higher level players' skill level, patterns, technique, and training intensity.

Negatives

1. Players don't develop their creativity as much when always playing higher level opponents in practice. There can be no time to experiment or work on deficits.
2. It can be demoralizing and stressful to always lose in practice. Lack of success can hurt players' self-confidence.
3. Some players get very nervous when playing higher level kids. This can build anxiety in the player.
4. Always playing with older players can be socially isolating for some players.
5. For players who are not physically ready, playing up can increase the likelihood of musculoskeletal injury due to the higher forces being applied to the ball, racquet, and body.

Competing Up

Competing Up means entering events in older and/or stronger divisions,

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sometimes in regions far away from home.

In addition to the positives and negatives listed above, here are a few additional pros/cons on competing up:

Positives

1. New and diverse competition can be found in higher divisions and in other regions around the country and world.
2. Traveling to new foreign places can be stimulating and also builds experience for the pro tour lifestyle.

Negatives

1. The player is generally unable to experiment with new skills on the court because he is just trying to survive.
2. The player can miss out on learning how to handle pressure because playing up tends to apply less pressure in competition.
3. Traveling frequently can be a mental and emotional grind—and can mentally fatigue a player over time.
4. Traveling can eat up a lot of training time. Some coaches prefer a local tournament schedule to allow for more training in between events and after losses.

Conclusion

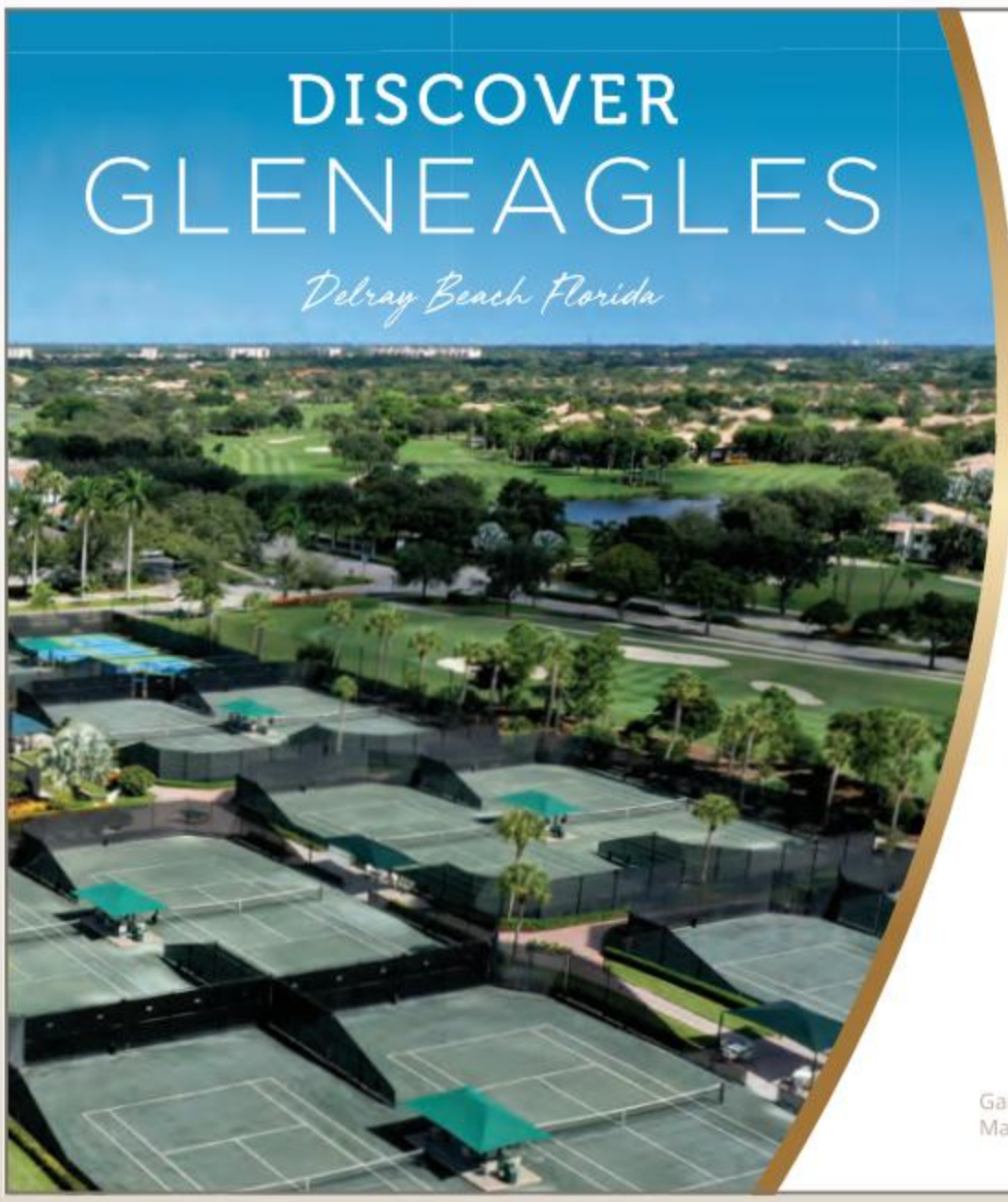
As a parent or coach, or if you are a player yourself, you will have to balance the aforementioned pros and cons when deciding when and if to play up. Remember that there is not one correct way; rather, there are different pathways that work for different personalities.

I usually search for a reasonable middle ground with my charges. For my players, I like to see a balance: Some play against peers—combined with a healthy amount of playing up for challenge.

Watch out for the physical and mental risks of playing up. Sometimes, with certain players, playing up too much can risk injury and undermine player confidence. Confusingly, with certain personalities, playing up can be incredibly motivating and healthy. Make a clear plan—and be flexible and quick to adjust the training and competition schedule based on player observation and feedback.

Please check out my podcast The Prodigy Maker Show, Episode 47, for an in depth discussion on this topic!

Chris Lewit is a former number one for Cornell and a pro circuit player. He is a high-performance coach, educator, and the author of two best-selling books: The Secrets of Spanish Tennis and The Tennis Technique Bible. He has coached numerous top 10 nationally-ranked players and is known for his expertise in building the foundations of young prodigies. Chris trains players during the school year in the NYC area, and players come from around the country to his summer camp in the paradise of Vermont. He may be reached by phone at (914) 462-2912, e-mail ChrisLewit@gmail.com or visit ChrisLewit.com.



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USTA Eastern Conference Going Virtual

The annual USTA Eastern Conference will take place virtually in 2021. From the USTA:

When the USTA Eastern tennis community came together last winter for its annual professional development gathering, nobody could have foreseen how the world would change so drastically just one month later. At the time, wildfires in Australia were the most pressing global concern. The phrase "social distance" had yet to enter the vernacular. We boldly discussed big ideas and strategies for bringing even more people into our tennis family; our conference goal, after all, was to convey a "clear vision for a more inclusive future".

Of course, 2020 had alternative plans. The year presented—and is still presenting— immeasurable challenges and heartbreak. Amid those struggles, however, we have witnessed no shortage of diligence, creativity and resilience as our community has banded together to uplift our great lifetime sport.

While we cannot be together in person, our 2021 virtual conference will provide the same opportunities for collaboration and innovation, which are perhaps more urgent than ever before. Throughout the week, a wide variety of tennis pros, coaches, park officials, club owners, facility managers, NJTL directors and more will share the innovative ideas they successfully implemented as they faced unprecedented obstacles. We'll talk to industry leaders and VIPs about the state of youth sports and what the future looks like. USTA representatives will review all the major (and exciting) competitive structure and technological changes in store for the year ahead. We will, for the first time, hold a special panel for USTA League players and captains, and we will host multiple on-court demonstrations you can enjoy from the safety of your living room. And we will discuss what support we as an organization can continue to offer. As always, our tennis community is at its strongest when we are able to work in concert.

Congratulations to Metro Region's own Alexander Bessarabov of the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center who will be honored with the Junior Team Tennis Award, which is awarded to a captain or coordinator who has made a significant contribution in the growth and development of USTA Junior Team Tennis in the section.

Scheduled to appear at the conference will be:

- **Eric Butorac**, USTA Director of Professional Tennis Operations and Player Relations and former ATP world No. 17 in doubles.
- **Kathy Rinaldi**, USTA Player Development Head of Women's Tennis, Team USA Billie Jean King Cup Captain, 1985 Wimbledon semifinalist and former WTA world No. 7 in singles.
- **Luke Jensen**, ESPN Tennis Analyst, 1993 French Open Doubles Champion and former ATP world No. 6 in doubles.

Visit https://www.usta.com/en/home/stay-current/eastern/2021-eastern-tennis-conference.html to register!

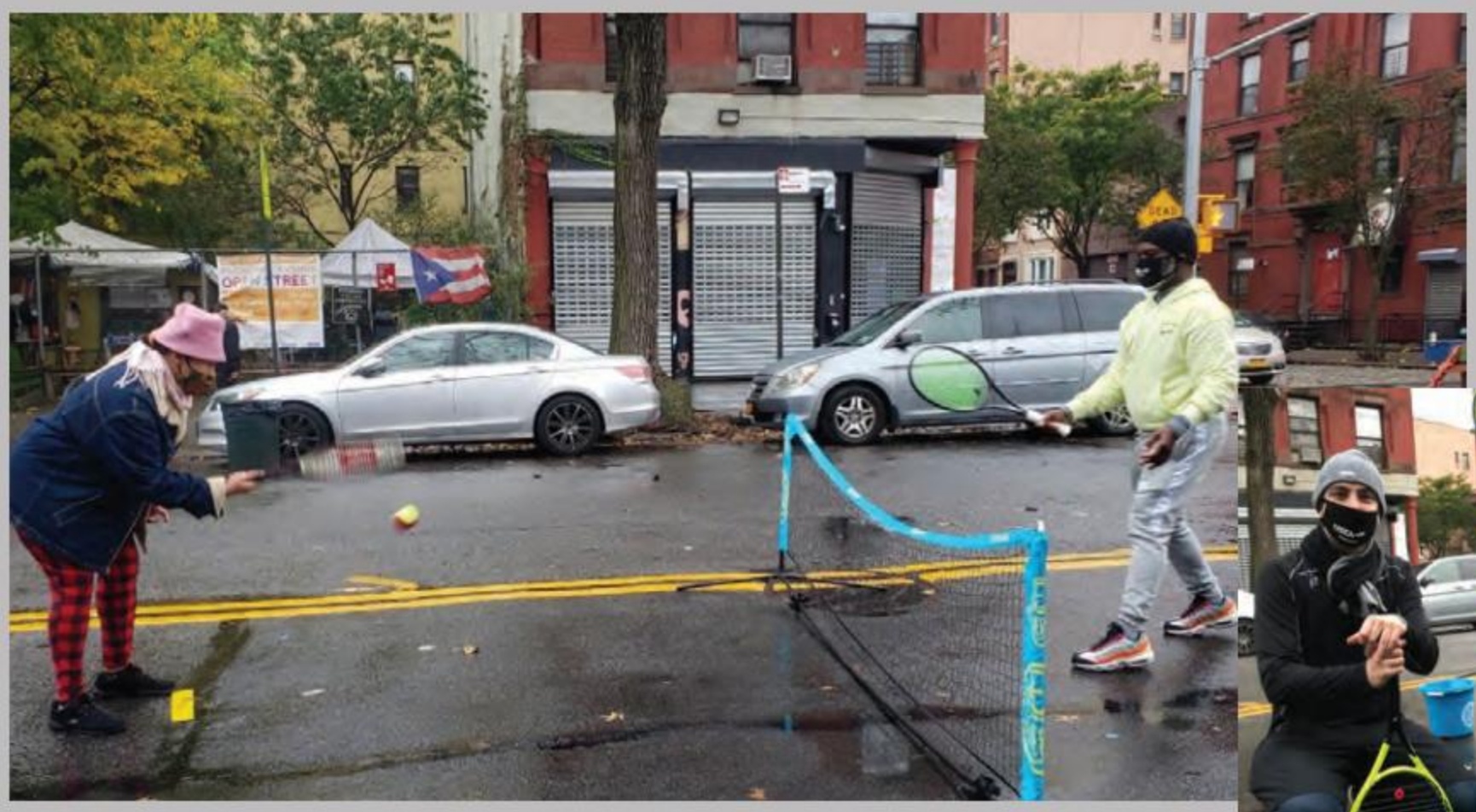
Remembering Mayor David Dinkins

The New York tennis community lost one of its most revered individuals as former NYC Mayor and devout tennis fan David Dinkins passed away. Dinkins was the first and only African-American man to serve as the city's mayor, and became a mainstay at the U.S. Open every single year.

After serving as mayor, Dinkins joined the board of the USTA, and the Eastern section named its Junior Tennis Foundation Scholarship in his name beginning in 1990, an award still given out to young tennis players in NYC to this day. His tennis legacy also includes his dedication to the NJTL network, USTA Foundation and the New York Junior Tennis & Learning.

"Mayor Dinkins has made innumerable contributions to tennis and his work will support so many children in the years ahead. Beyond the sport, however, Mayor Dinkins was an incredibly friendly, thoughtful and kind-hearted presence. Our thoughts are with his family during the difficult time." -Jenny Schnitzer, USTA Eastern Executive Director & CEO

Pop-Up Tennis in Harlem



Tennis is still going strong throughout the region in New York City with more people continuing to try out the game, and that includes a pop-up tennis station in Harlem.

Along with Uptown Grand Central – NHEMA, a community group who turns advocacy into action to transform East 125th Street into a thriving corridor, and collaborations across East Harlem with our small businesses and neighborhood, we got people "Back in the Swing" with tennis play on Pleasant Avenue Open Street.

Parent Perspective On Coaching, Mentoring and Life

By Jayson Schwartz

I am the proud parent of two junior tennis standouts. Jonathan and Adam grew up in Nassau County and developed a passion for tennis at a young age. My passion for the game was contagious. I wanted tennis to be a vehicle for learning life skills such as setting goals, working hard, playing by the rules, demonstrating good sportsmanship, and learning how to deal with both success and failure. Winning was secondary. Disappointment is part of life. Success comes from a good work ethic and being able to get back up if unsuccessful. I wanted tennis to enable my children to get the best education possible. I knew what it has done for me.

I was a tennis player myself. Ranked in the top five in each age group and fifteen in the men's division, I went to Penn and won two Ivy titles, was elected captain and named Most Valuable Player. I received my MBA at Wharton and was the Assistant Men's Tennis Coach and ran Penn's indoor tennis facility. I am a member of the Penn Tennis Hall of Fame and have always loved coaching young people. The team members spent more time with me then their parents, what an awesome responsibility to have. My goal was to teach life skills to young kids as they transition to adulthood.

That experience prepared me to be a better parent. Junior tennis was a great experience. I spent a lot of time with Jon and Adam. I wanted tennis to be a wonderful experience for them. Jon was ranked in each age group and finished top 10 in the East, attended the University of Delaware, where he was a captain. Adam finished number one in the East, Nassau County Champion, State Champion, and High School All-American. Following that, he attended the University of Pennsylvania where he played on the team, was captain, and named the Most Valuable Player; just like his father 40 years before.

Jon and Adam started their business careers with me at Cooper-Horowitz as commercial mortgage brokers. It was a wonderful experience to work with them each day, teach them this business and watch their development. I could see they would do what it takes to be successful. I believe a result of all they learned on the tennis court. Setting goals and working hard to achieve them. After two years, they went out on their own. They joined JLL and that took their careers to the next level, and from there, they formed their own company which was purchased by a major real estate firm in 2010. I often dreamt how far tennis would take them in life. Honestly, I never got this far in my dreams!

Today Jon and Adam work together at Walker and Dunlop which is a publicly traded company providing financing services for commercial real estate. They are very successful commercial Mortgage Brokers. I believe a result of their tennis experience and good parents. Not defined by winning and losing. They are both married to the most wonderful young ladies, Jodi and Perri, respectively. The most powerful word in the dictionary is TEAM. It stands for Together Each Achieve More.

In conclusion, good parenting and coaching are not defined by winning and losing. It's about mentoring and inspiring someone to be passionate about what they are doing and what they want to achieve. The same is true in business. It's called leadership! There is no more important role in life especially in today's world.

What **Not to Do** As a Coach

By Gilad Bloom

As the old saying goes, "You should always learn from your mistakes." I add to that you should also learn from other people's mistakes.

Throughout my coaching career, I have tried to learn from my mistakes and just like everyone else, I certainly made lots of them over the years. The trick is to not repeat those mistakes and as you reduce the number of those mistakes, you become a better coach.

Being a former player, I remember some of the mistakes that my coaches used to make, and I try not to repeat them. Here is a list of the top five most common mistakes that coaches make. I have been guilty of these mistakes early in my coaching career, and I try to avoid repeating them every time I step onto the court.

1. Pointing out technical or strategic mistakes of students by telling them what they did wrong

As a young coach, I would let my students know that they "didn't bend their knees," or "should have hit a ball cross-court." But as you evolve as a coach, you realize that a better way of teaching is by asking the student, "Why do you think you missed that ball in the net?" or "If you could play this point again, where would you hit that running forehand you just missed"? By asking the student questions such as these, you instill the ability to analyze their mistakes and for them to come up with a solution on their own. Most of the time, they will know what they did wrong right away. When they come up with an answer on their own, they internalize the instructions better than if I told them.

2. Getting emotional or confrontational with students

As a young coach who went straight from the pro tour into teaching, I was very intense, competitive and sometimes, emotional with students. I was passionate about the game, and I would take it personally if the student didn't perform well or was not committed enough. Over the years, I have learned that there is only so much a coach can do and that it is not productive or professional for a coach to show anger of any kind. The kids look up to the coach and expect them to always be in control. Over the years, I have learned to absorb unpleasant situations and react accordingly. Sometimes, I will create "fake anger" in practice just to shake up things if I see the students are lethargic, but that "anger" is controlled and calculated, never personal. The main thing is to finish the session with a smile and a handshake.

3. Over coaching

As a young player, I used to hate it when my coach would talk to me too much during practice. Most of the times when I missed, I knew it and I didn't need to hear what I did wrong every time I missed a ball. As a young coach, I was often guilty of that mistake myself. Over the years, I have learned that sometimes, less is more. It is one thing to hear the same instructions over and over while performing repetition drills, but during match play, the student needs to develop their own character and deal with different situations on their own, so I instruct the pros in my program to say very little during point play and let

the kids play it out. Tennis is an individual sport and players need to be at peace when they play. I find that when you talk to students less, the meaning of the words increases and the students listen better. It is better to sum up the match at the end of the set.

4. Getting stuck on a certain dogmatic system of coaching

I grew up being taught the sport of tennis by people who played with wood rackets and hit groundstrokes with a Continental Grip. I had great coaches and mentors, and I still believe in many of the "old school" ways of teaching … most of them still work. However, the game has evolved so much … the rackets, the grips, the style of play, and certainly the way people practice. As a young coach, I was very rigid in the way I taught. My thinking was that the methods worked for me so, it will work on my students. But I quickly realized that a coach should keep evolving with the game and make constant adjustments to their style of coaching. The ever-changing game and the characteristics of the new generation requires the coaches to be on their toes constantly and to be able to come up with new fresh drills. In fact, as a tennis coach, you have to constantly re-invent yourself.

5. Teaching everyone the same way

As a former pro on the tour who turned coach, I knew a thing or two about playing the game, but coaching is a different game altogether. Early on in my career, I used to put all of my students through the same "grinder," but I soon found out that due to the individuality of the game, each player is different. The challenge as a coach is to find the right key to each player's brain and to give each student what they need. Some students need an "Iron Fist" approach and like to get pushed to the limit. Some students need a "softer" approach. Most kids need a combination of the two. The coach really needs to be aware and show some sensitivity and act as a sports psychologist to figure out the best way to teach each student and it can get even more tricky when teaching a group of kids that are inevitably different from each other. That is what makes the job of a tennis coach so interesting!

Gilad Bloom is a former Israeli Davis Cup player and two-time Olympian who played on the ATP Tour 1983-1995, reaching the fourth round of the U.S. Open in 1990, and achieving a highest ranking of 61 in singles. Bloom currently runs his own tennis academy, Gilad Bloom Tennis, and can be reached at Bloom.Gilad@gmail.com.

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Photo credit: Ryan Loco

After Successful 2020 Season, WTT Looks Ahead to 2021

The 2020 World TeamTennis season was a model for success after hosting a month-long bubble at the Greenbrier Resort in West Virginia last summer. Featuring nine teams and hundreds of league personnel who all committed to making the bubble work, the season was completed with no positive COVID-19 cases. In the end, it was the New York Empire that hoisted its first King Trophy in thrilling fashion over the Chicago Smash.

"We all had a great meeting at the beginning of the season and I said that we were all on one team," said WTT CEO Carlos Silva. "The staff, the production crew, the players, the coaches, we all had to pull together if we were going to get through it. Of course someone's got to lose and win in sport, but even in that case, I think everyone feels they were part of the WTT team…I think every single person, including all the players, were very diligent to make sure that we could get through the season. I feel very blessed and lucky that we did it."

New York Tennis Magazine sat down with New York Empire head coach Luke Jensen to discuss last year's league and team success, as well as look ahead to the 2021 WTT season.

What was life like for you and your team in the bubble?

There was some strong leadership that decided that we're doing it, and it starts with our CEO Carlos Silva. There was so much attention to detail, with everybody. The communication was fantastic. You had to have two negative tests before even entering the bubble and so everybody was always on their toes. All coaches, players and personnel knew what our role was, and everyone did a great job. There is going to be one team that wins and the rest lose, but we can all win by making sure this works and being a model for how it can be done. We played pretty much every day. They resurfaced some local public courts to be used for practice courts. There was a lot of engagement with the 500-1,000 fans that could come and watch. A total buy in by the league, the players, the personnel and the leadership, and we knew what it was going to take to grind. You practiced, worked out, golfed, went four-wheeling, skeet shooting, horseback riding, etc. There were so many activities to do when not playing tennis. So if you could just lock into this mindset of playing your match, training, and recovery, it was going to be fine. It was a massive team effort by everybody to not screw it up. No one in the bubble tested positive so it was definitely a win.

What was your role as head coach in terms of making sure your team was ready to play?

To me, you're dealing with professionals competing for big money, so you had to make sure the players were ready. So if Sabine Liskci wants 15 balls fed to her backhand on the sideline so she can work on her running backhand, you're there for her with a bucket of balls ready. If Jack Sock wants to practice his volleys, you're there. Whatever it is. You know their patterns, you know what they like and don't like. So my job was to make sure they felt ready so they could

mentally lock in. WTT is a sprint, because of the scoring and short sets, everything happens so fast. The way we drafted and brought in players was strategic, I love seasoned veterans. To me, when you have experienced veterans, you don't have to do a lot, you just have to make sure when they do need something, you're there for them. And I think it helped, being a former player, both on the tour and in WTT, to understand the format, the pressures, and the speed of it.

How impactful was having a multiple-time Grand Slam champion and former #1 like Kim Clijsters on the team?

She was using WTT as a springboard for her comeback to the tour. And before she got hurt, she was beating everybody. She beat Sloane [Stephens], [Sofia] Kenin, [Danielle] Collins. A lot of these players grew up watching her and dreaming of being the next Clijsters. That matters. It was a huge asset for us because she brought her entire fitness team and her personal coach. She left her kids and family back at home so she could concentrate on her tennis for the first week. It was all business, and that really helped us. Especially considering we added new elements to the team, we made trades, and of course, there were injuries. We called her our Team Mom. If I wasn't pushing the right buttons, they'd go to her. On that exciting play, the last point of the championship, with $500,000 on the line, I go in there first and the team comes in to talk to [Coco] Vandewghe and [Nicole] Melichar. Who was the last one talking to them before the point? It's Team Mom. It's Clijsters giving them one last pep talk. It was such a huge asset to have Kim Clijsters get the final word in and just encouraging Coco to go for it.

How do you build off of last year's success, both as a league and as a team?

As a league we are looking at the old model we had. We got so much coverage media-wise, and it was such a big win to put together four straight matches a day for weeks at a time with some of the sport's biggest stars. We haven't finalized everything yet.

In terms of our team, these pros grind it out year-round, every practice, every tournament, every win and loss, and so I want our team to just have more fun than everyone else. Coco and Melichar go back to the San Diego Aviators. I'm trying to work out an opportunity to get those players back. We don't know if Kim will be back. And it's an Olympic year once again, so how does that come into play? So we'll see how everything works out, but our goal is to once again bring in veterans that are not afraid to have a lot of fun.

The 2021 WTT season is set to begin on July 11 and run through July 25. Stay tuned to NYTennisMag.com for news and updates regarding WTT and the New York Empire.

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Cary Leeds Center for Tennis & Learning

1720 Crotona Avenue | Bronx, N.Y. | (718) 247-7420
CaryLeedsInfo@NYJTL.org

The Cary Leeds Center for Tennis & Learning houses a two-story, 12,000-square foot clubhouse, educational spaces, and access to 20 courts (10 bubbled for winter/indoor use) and two stadium courts that seat up to 800 spectators. Led by a world-class team of tennis professionals offering programs and private lessons for juniors and adults of all skill levels, the Center also hosts summer camps, tournaments and community-based events.

The Cary Leeds Center for Tennis & Learning is the flagship home of New York Junior Tennis & Learning (NYJTL), the largest youth tennis and education non-profit in the nation. In serving its larger mission, the Cary Leeds Center provides 6,000 hours of free tennis court time to the community.

CARY LEEDS CENTER
for tennis & learning

CaryLeedsTennis.org

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Centercourt Performance Tennis Academy

222 N Passaic Ave. | Chatham, N.J. 07960
(973) 855-3111 | (862) 308-3029
Conrad@CentercourtClub.com

Centercourt Performance Tennis Academy boasts the toughest playground in the North East and has created a true Culture of excellence. The quality and intensity of programs, daily in-person academic support, personalized competitive scheduling as well as hosting a full calendar of UTR/ITA tournaments monthly makes Centercourt Tennis Academy the top choice.

Our coaches have walked the pathway and take pride in delivering only the best cutting edge Player Development Programs which are personalized to the needs of each athlete. Our specialized approach, teamwork, world-class facilities as well as the unique experience each player receives makes Centercourt a great the place to call home.

Centercourt's facilities are comprised of eight New Jersey locations, with more on the way. Centercourt's Performance Tennis home base is located in Chatham, N.J., conveniently located 45 minutes from New York City with transportation and boarding options.

While Centercourt encourages a tennis culture of excellence, Centercourt also places a strong emphasis and focus on academics and work ethic. Since its full-time academic inception Centercourt's scholar-athletes have committed to play collegiate tennis at strong academic institutions such as Yale, Columbia University, Wake Forest University, New York University and many more. Centercourt offers schooling through K12, Laurel Springs and The Dwight School, however our point of difference are our on-site teachers who work individually with each student-athlete to ensure they are at their potential daily.

Team, long-lasting relationships and family at Centercourt that is essential in creating the ideal training environment. We firmly believe in communication between the players, parents and coaches and that players need to be developed holistically to become the best they can be. We believe that Competition is the backbone to development with players competing locally, nationally and at ITF level regularly. Centercourt's full-time athletes become proficient in Technical through the use of our SMAP Video Analysis Programs and also undertake weekly mentally tough tennis seminars. We challenge players to become top student-athletes through our academics guided by our team in class daily.

We strive daily to ensure that our objective is clear—to ensure our environment always feel like home to our players.

Visit Centercourtcta.com for more information on after-school programs, specialized weekend training and our Full-Time Academy. Our Annual Calendar of UTR, ITA, College Series, Junior Series and Official Match Play is also a perfect supplement for anyone ready to compete.

Centercourtcta.com

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Chris Lewit Tennis Academy

3997 VT-100 | Londonderry, Vt. | (914) 462-2912
Chris@ChrisLewit.com

Chris Lewit Tennis Academy (CLTA) is a serious high performance academy set in the natural paradise of Vermont.

CLTA offers year-round full-time training, short-term training, and a world-famous high Performance summer camp.

Players have the opportunity to train personally in very small groups with Chris Lewit, one of leading high-performance junior development coaches in the United States. Chris is known as an expert in technique and biomechanics, and in Spanish training methods. He has developed numerous top 10 nationally-ranked juniors, many of whom are now graduating to the pro circuit. He also has experience building the foundations of many young prodigies.

Players live in a charming Vermont Inn and have exclusive use of a private tennis club, CLTA Vermont, which offers both outdoor red clay courts and indoor hard courts in the event of rain, gym, yoga studio and clubhouse. New this year: Visiting players and families can stay in Chris's private carriage house apartment!

CLTA offers a unique teaching system based on the Bruguera Method from Spain, as well as other European influences based on Chris Lewit's travels abroad. Author of the best-selling book, The Secrets of Spanish Tennis, Chris has spent the last 14 years studying with many of the legendary coaches in Spain and Europe. He brings the most cutting-edge training methods from Europe back to the U.S. for his students.

All students receive personal coaching and mentoring directly from Chris Lewit, and are supported by his trained staff of top college and ATP players.

For more information, contact Chris directly to discuss your player's development plan by e-mail at Chris@ChrisLewit.com, call (914) 462-2912 or visit ChrisLewit.com.

CHRIS LEWIT
CLTA
TENNIS ACADEMY
ChrisLewit.com

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CourtSense Tennis Training Centers at Tenafly and Bogota Racquet Club

195 County Road | Tenafly, N.J.
(201) 569-1114/(201) 489-1122

CourtSense offers the top tennis facilities in Northern New Jersey and provides a comprehensive program of tennis instruction delivered by professional coaches, using the finest techniques and technologies. With CourtSense, you'll achieve your personal best, because our training is of the highest professional caliber—and easily tailored to suit your age and skill level. Children under 10 years of age benefit immensely from a proper training foundation—eliminating poor techniques that could mar their game later in life. We love helping juniors and adults achieve their goals on and off the tennis courts.

CourtSense Tennis Training Centers have a whole range of activities to support junior and adult tennis lovers. From teddy tennis and afterschool clinics to high-performance full-day program, cardio tennis, internal and USTA leagues, and private and group sessions, we have something to suit everyone. CourtSense students have access to 15 indoor tennis courts (All of them are PlaySight smart-courts), world-class strength and conditioning centers and luxury players' lounges.

CourtSense's club in Bogota, N.J. primarily specializes on the high-performance and tournament players. We have worked with players who have become ATP- and WTA-ranked players, U.S. Olympians, as well as many college scholarship athletes. CourtSense's high-performance coaches, in collaboration with its fitness staff and a sports psychologist, have developed a program that maximizes athletes' strengths, both on and off the court. CourtSense uses tennis as a vehicle to teach life lessons by tapping into the spirit of every player, with passion, expertise and character. We want our juniors to be the best tennis players they can possibly be, but at the same time, be prepared to be successful in anything they want to be once their tennis careers are over.

Another unique aspect to CourtSense's facilities is the fitness programming provided in partnership with Magnus: Expand Human Potential. Magnus' team has the ability to assess, correct, enhance and reassess an athlete–giving you everything you need to compete like a winner. CourtSense members have access to cutting-edge strength and conditioning technology, private sessions, nutritional counseling and psychological skills training.

For more information on CourtSense programs, call (201) 569-1114 and (201) 489-1122 or e-mail Info@CourtSense.com. Registration is now open for the winter sessions at CourtSense.com.

COURTSENSE
TENNIS TRAINING CENTER

CourtSense.com

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Evert Tennis Academy
10334 Diego Drive South | Boca Raton, Fla.

The Evert Tennis Academy (ETA) is located in the Mission Bay area of Boca Raton, Fla. With 23 courts, pristine grounds, state-of-the-art-equipment, a caring staff and family atmosphere combine make Evert Tennis Academy a beautiful and unique training environment.

As the proud home to more than 15 Grand Slam participants and 100 Division I college athletes, Evert Tennis Academy has a proven record of success in developing champions at the highest levels. Chris Evert, tennis legend and winner of 18 Grand Slam titles, and John Evert, world-renowned developmental coach and academy director, believe in designing personalized programs that consist of a strategic balance between technical, tactical, mental and physical training. They pride themselves on handpicking some of the finest developmental coaches working in the sport who are dedicated to the instruction, development and success of each athlete

Academy and Developmental Programs

The Academy Program at Evert systematically addresses every aspect of a player's game through a daily regimen of technical, tactical, mental and physical training. The Morning Training Session is composed of drilling, and strength and conditioning. The program is continued in the afternoon with a focus towards competition and tactics. The Developmental Program at Evert Tennis Academy is designed to take players to the next level by providing a very exclusive, individualized program and the difference between it and the Academy Program lies within the daily 1:1 lesson. Boarding students age 18 and younger enrolled in the Full-Time, Weekly or Camp programs, stay in our three-story dormitory. Each dorm room houses up to two students during the school year and up to four students during Camp and Summer Sessions with boys and girls being housed on separate buildings.

Evert Tennis Academy conveniently provides one-on-one airport transportation for its boarding students, for a fee (subject to change), to all three area international airports: (PBI) West Palm Beach (35 minutes), (FLL) Fort Lauderdale (35 minutes), (MIA) Miami International (55 minutes).

All transportation coordination is handled directly through the Academy, making it stress-free and easy for you.

Please contact Evert Tennis Academy at (561) 488- 2001 for more information or e-mail Andrew.Parker@EvertAcademy.com.

EVERT
TENNIS ACADEMY
EvertAcademy.com

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Gilad Bloom Tennis

(914) 907-0041
Bloom.Gilad@gmail.com

Gilad Bloom Quick Start Tennis Program for ages 4-8

Gilad Bloom Tennis has been operating in New York City since 2000 and is a boutique junior program geared for juniors ages six through 18, who want to take their game to the next level. It is a year-round program which offers group sessions, private lessons and tournament travel, seven days a week.

The program is personally run by Gilad Bloom, there's a strong emphasis on technique and footwork, and a lot of personal attention, as well as attention to detail, with a maximum of four kids per court.

During the Fall/Winter Season, Gilad Bloom Tennis runs sessions at Riverdale Tennis Center (May-October), on Oct. 20, it moves indoors to New York Tennis Club until May 1, and then it moves back outdoors to Riverdale TC.

Bloom is a former Israeli Davis Cup player and two-time Olympian, who has been running his own tennis program since 2000. Gilad served as director of tennis at John McEnroe Tennis Academy for two years. He played on the ATP Tour from 1983-1995, reaching the fourth round of the U.S. Open in 1990. Gilad reached a career-high singles ranking of 61st in the world and was Israel's singles champion on three occasions.

For more information, visit GiladBloom.com or e-mail Gilad Bloom directly at Bloom.Gilad@gmail.com.

GILAD BLOOM TENNIS

GiladBloom.com

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Manhattan Plaza Racquet Club

450 West 43rd Street | New York, N.Y.
(212) 594-0554 | Milos@AdvantageTennisClubs.com

Manhattan Plaza Racquet Club (MPRC), an Advantage Tennis Club, is located at 450 West 43rd Street (between 9th Avenue and 10th Avenue) in New York City (open Monday-Sunday from 6:00 a.m. until midnight).

MPRC offers luxury tennis in the heart of Manhattan, with five indoor championship hard courts, air conditioning in the summer, a luxurious duplex clubhouse with terrace, a new tennis bubble, private lessons and group lessons for all ages and levels, game-arranging, quality tennis programs for members and non-members, leagues, tennis camps, parties, doubles play, tournaments, a pro shop with stringing services, and nice locker rooms. MPRC membership includes a full membership to Manhattan Plaza Health Club. MPRC members can fully access the Health Club's many fitness classes, climbing walls, gym, glass enclosed swimming pool, sundeck, sauna and more. There is indoor parking also available on the premises.

MPRC's most popular program for members is game arranging that follows the NTRP Rating System. MPRC has some of the best tennis-teaching professionals in New York City who offer private lessons and group lessons.

MPRC offers several categories of membership, including the Advantage Passport Tennis/Sports MultiClub Membership to Roosevelt Island Racquet Club & Sports Park and the New York Tennis Club. For membership information, contact MPRC Assistant Manager and Membership Director Lauren Hartman at (212) 594-0554.

MPRC also offers season/open tennis time, and for more information on these opportunities, contact MPRC Manager Milos Vojvodic at (212) 594-0554. For more information on tennis lessons and Adult Tennis Programs, contact MPRC Assistant Tennis Director Bruce Barney at (212) 594-0554. MPRC also offers QuickStart classes for ages three and older as well as Junior Development Programs for boys and girls ages six to 17. For more information, contact MPRC's Junior Program Administrator Gabriel Slotnick at (212) 594-0554.

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MatchPoint NYC
2781 Shell Road | Brooklyn, N.Y. | (718) 769-0001
MatchPoint.NYC

MatchPoint NYC Mill Basin
2350 East 69th Street | Brooklyn, N.Y. | (718) 444-3600
MatchPointComplex@gmail.com

MatchPoint NYC
9000 Bay Parkway | Brooklyn, N.Y.
(718) 372-9000 | MatchPoint.NYC

MatchPoint NYC clubs are your sports and fitness destination for the entire family and with three locations throughout New York City, you are never too far from your next tennis adventure.

MatchPoint NYC is the sports and fitness destination for the entire family, with three locations in Brooklyn, N.Y., only 30 minutes away from downtown Manhattan. Spread across 120,000-square-feet, MatchPoint's premier health and fitness complex features a cutting-edge tennis facility that includes nine indoor tennis courts.

MatchPoint's Tennis Coaching Team is led by Numrud Nino Muhatasov, co-founder and director of MatchPoint NYC (a former coach of top WTA and ATP players, former captain and number one singles and doubles player for the St. John's University Tennis Team, Big East Conference Finalist and two-time Most Valuable Player), together with Director of Tennis Sergey Igel (U.S. Open Official Hitting Partner, 2011 MAAC MVP of the Year, USPTR Certified Coach).

MatchPoint NYC's world-class junior tournament training programs (by invitation only) are comprised of highly-ranked players on national and international levels. The club offers personalized coaching for each player, plus private lessons, intensive drills, match play, tennis-specific fitness conditioning and mental conditioning. MatchPoint has a wide range of programs for all levels, including adult leagues, QuickStart, Junior Development (beginner, intermediate, and advanced) and private lessons taught by accredited USPTA-certified coaches.

MatchPoint NYC's WiFi-enabled Café is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Relax and unwind after a game, grab a bite to eat or relax while you watch your child on the court. Enjoy a healthy snack or get refreshed with a smoothie at the juice bar.

Additional club features include a luxury full-sized gym, three group fitness studios, a Junior Olympic pool, a basketball court and a variety of youth and adult recreational and competitive training programs. MatchPoint NYC-certified instructors and personal trainers are friendly, approachable and ready to assist in your individual fitness objectives. Join MatchPoint NYC and FIND YOUR GAME!

MatchPoint NYC

MatchPoint.NYC

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Midtown Tennis Club
341 8th Avenue | New York, N.Y.
(212) 989-8572

Midtown Tennis Club is Manhattan's original indoor tennis facility, conveniently located in the heart of New York City. Situated on 8th Avenue, between 26th and 27th Streets, Midtown Tennis Club is easily accessible by public transportation. In a city filled with commitments and membership dues, it's a breeze to reserve at Midtown for an hour or more of court time, a private lesson or one of Midtown's clinics.

Midtown has four indoor HarTru courts for year-round use and four outdoor HarTru courts which are bubbled and heated during the winter months. Midtown's outdoor season enables City-dwellers to play on our open-air courts with spectacular views of the Manhattan skyline.

Midtown offers an extensive team of tennis professionals who are available to provide lessons to all ages and levels. If you are looking to develop your existing skills, learn new techniques, get a great cardio workout or prepare for your next tournament, Midtown can accommodate your needs!

Midtown's clinics are offered for total beginners and all levels up to competition players. Sign up for one month, one day or all-year! The Friday Night Round-Robin is a popular event in the winter season which attracts intermediate to advanced players looking for friendly doubles matches. It is a great way to meet new tennis friends.

Enroll your aspiring tennis prodigy in Midtown's Junior Development Program. Classes are available after school for ages 4 and up and for all levels. The Club features the QuickStart programs, as well as a competitive program for more advanced players. Midtown maintains small group classes for maximum progress. Classes are offered throughout the school year as well as camp during the summer months. The Club also hosts mini programs during the Winter and Spring breaks. A great sport for social distancing!

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New York Tennis Club

3081 Harding Avenue | Throgs Neck (Bronx), N.Y.
(718) 239-7919 | MarkKeye@AdvantageTennisClubs.com
NYTCTreasurer@gmail.com

Founded in 1886, New York Tennis Club is the oldest active tennis club in New York. Throughout the years, the Club has maintained a reputation for its restful atmosphere, congeniality of its members and its professional approach to a truly popular sport. With a patio and viewing deck and six HarTru courts, the Club is a haven in a quiet corner of the City. Convenient to Manhattan, Queens and lower Westchester, it's also the best value in the Tri-State area. Sit back and relax in the recently renovated clubhouse and lounge, grab a bite to eat at the snack bar or unwind in the remodeled locker rooms. There is also on-site racquet stringing in the pro shop and ample free parking located on the premises.

New York Tennis Club is a club for all seasons. The two climate-controlled bubbles are equipped with shadow-less, non-glare lighting, with hourly court time, as well as seasonal court options. Hours of operation are 7:00 a.m.-Midnight, seven days a week, and no membership is required.

During outdoor season, when the Club offers unlimited play—as much tennis as members wish. Tennis lovers can soak up the sun on lush lawns surrounded by flower gardens, sit in the shade of willow trees or have lunch on a covered patio or in the clubhouse, which offers dining facilities, locker rooms and showers. For additional information, visit NewYorkTennisClub.com.

The Club offers adult programs for skill sets of all levels. Program offerings include singles and doubles leagues, a comprehensive game arranging program for both singles and doubles players, private and group instruction for all levels, cardio tennis classes, and tennis parties, where guests are welcome.

Advantage Tennis Clubs hosts over 30 USTA sanction tournaments at NYTC throughout the year. Players enrolled in Advantage QuickStart and the Jr Development Program receive a 20 percent discount on entry fees. For more information please contact Bill Wiese at BWiese@AdvantageTennisClubs.com or call (718) 239-7919.

One more special feature: The Advantage Passport Membership, which offers members a whole new level of benefits and access. Passport memberships include free summer court time on reserved courts at Roosevelt Island Racquet Club (RIRC) and New York Tennis Club, plus membership privileges at Manhattan Plaza Racquet Club, Manhattan Plaza Health Club and New York Tennis Club.

AdvantageTennisClubs.com

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New York Tennis at Great Neck

12 Shore Drive | Great Neck, N.Y.
(516) 233-2790

A hidden gem conveniently located and open to players of all ages and levels, New York Tennis at Great Neck is a short ride from anywhere in Nassau County and Queens. This scenic club overlooking the Little Neck Bay features five year-round clay courts, two outdoor season hard courts, and a highly-skilled and experienced coaching staff comprised of former ATP, ITF and NCAA players.

New York Tennis at Great Neck has been serving up tennis in this location since 2010. Initially formed over 30 years ago by the late and legendary Tennis Director Howie Arons, the junior program has produced more than 90 NCAA players, 250 ranked junior players, and 1,000 high school players. The club's adult program prides itself in having a wide array of programming, from dynamic clinics and express tennis for beginners, to high energy cardio tennis and in-club competitive leagues, ensuring adults have exactly what they're looking for. The waterfront location, accommodating staff, and friendly atmosphere has also made the club an increasingly popular destination for those looking to host events, such as birthday parties, holiday parties and corporate outings.

What players enjoy most about playing at the club is the comfortable, relaxed and welcoming environment that they feel when they walk through the doors of New York Tennis at Great Neck. Passion, consistency and authenticity ring true every day at the club, where everyone feels at home and part of one big, but at the same time, tight-knit tennis family.

NEW YORK TENNIS
AT GREAT NECK
NYTAGN.com

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Roosevelt Island Racquet Club

281 Main Street | Roosevelt Island, N.Y.
(212) 935-0250 | SOKeefe@AdvantageTennisClubs.com

Now in its 27th year of operation, Roosevelt Island Racquet Club (RIRC) is part of Advantage Tennis Clubs. Roosevelt Island Racquet Club is conveniently located on beautiful Roosevelt Island, New York City's oasis on the East River. The Club features 12 HarTru courts under new bubbles with shadowless, non-glare lighting, heated and air conditioned for comfortable year-round play. The exercise room includes a treadmill, exercise bikes, elliptical trainers and free weights to accommodate almost any workout. The Club boasts a completely stocked pro shop, locker room facilities, two social lounges, Riverview Lounge with a breathtaking view of Manhattan's skyline, and free parking.

RIRC is easily accessible by tram, ferry, subway or car (free on-site parking). The Roosevelt Island Tram (from 60th Street and 2nd Avenue) stops adjacent to the Club, and the subway (F Train) stops one block from the club.

RIRC offers a range of adult programs for players of all levels. Program offerings range from the Advanced Singles League for the experienced competitive player, to Beginner Group Lessons for people new to the sport of tennis. Cardio tennis is one of the Club's most popular programs and is offered daily for those looking to combine a cardio workout with tennis. Whatever your goal, there is a program for you! The Advantage Junior Tennis Program offers year-round classes, camps and programs for all ages and levels.

There are QuickStart classes for ages three and older, summer and holiday camp programs, after-school programs, tournament training for advanced competitive players, and match play. During the school year, classes are offered both after-school and on Saturdays. The Advantage Junior Tennis Camp offers one-week sessions from mid-June through the end of August.

RIRC offers a Gold Membership that includes full Club privileges, 14-day advance reservation privileges, member court fees with an average savings of $35 per court hour, game arranging and member discount on all programs. The Club is excited to offer Advantage Passport Membership, which offers members a whole new level of benefits and access. Passport Memberships include free summer court time on reserved courts at RIRC and New York Tennis Club, plus membership privileges at Manhattan Plaza Racquet Club, Manhattan Plaza Health Club and New York Tennis Club.

For more information, contact Steve O'Keefe at (212) 935-0250.

ROOSEVELT ISLAND RACQUET CLUB

RIRCTennis.com

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Ross School Tennis Academy

20 Goodfriend Drive | East Hampton, N.Y.
TennisAcademy@Ross.org | (631) 907-5162

Ross School Tennis Academy (RSTA) is the premiere training center in the Hamptons, boasting a beautiful tennis facility that is open to the public and located on the Ross Upper School Campus in East Hampton, N.Y. The Tennis Center features six HarTru courts that are enclosed by a bubble from mid-fall through mid-spring, allowing for year-round play. The Tennis Center features state-of-the-art amenities such as spacious locker rooms, lower level lounge, convenient snack bar, and ping-pong tables, and the staff provides a fun and supportive atmosphere that allows for the greatest amount of success.

After-school programming, a dynamic program for junior players, and specialized summer programs are offered to make Ross Tennis Academy the place to play tennis in the Hamptons.

After-school Programs (Pre-K–Grade 12)

- Nursery-Grade 4: Specialized one-hour training program where players build a strong foundation through a variety of game-based and cooperative activities using 10U age appropriate (Red, Orange or Green) balls and nets that will prepare them for eventual full court play.
- Grade 5-Grade 12: Players build off their 10U foundation to further develop fundamental skills and techniques as they transition into yellow balls and prepare for full-court tournament competition. Ball control, strategy, and work ethic are all emphasized in this 90-minute session of drills and point play.

Players in kindergarten and higher are required to play twice per week in this program.

Integrated Training + Academic Program

- Designed for USTA/ITF players in grades seventh through 12 and postgraduates, RSTA is the first in the New York City area to have a full academic program with a complete physical and mental conditioning program. In addition, unlike other tennis academies, RSTA is a small, intimate program that allows student-athletes to develop lasting relationships with coaches, while receiving personalized instruction. Students who attend the Academy experience high-performance tennis training, while studying alongside their peers in a stimulating college preparatory learning community following a regular academic year (Ross.org/Tennis).
- Lessons and Court Rentals: Ross Tennis Academy also offers adult clinics, court rentals and private and group instruction for all ages and levels. The Tennis Center is also used for a variety of special events and is available for private parties.

ROSS SCHOOL TENNIS ACADEMY · RSTA ·

Ross.org/Tennis

2021 GUIDE
TO NEW YORK TENNIS MAGAZINE'S
TOP CLUBS & PROGRAMS

SPORTIME Randall's Island

Home of the John McEnroe Tennis Academy and the 501(c)(3) Johnny Mac Tennis Project

1 Randall's Island | New York, N.Y.

(212) 427-6150 | JKarl@SportimeNY.com

SPORTIME Randall's Island, a state-of-the-art, 20-court tennis club and training facility located on Randall's Island in Manhattan, is home to the John McEnroe Tennis Academy (JMTA) and to the 501(c)(3) Johnny Mac Tennis Project (JMTP).

SPORTIME Randall's Island features 160,000-square feet of tennis courts and amenities, including five indoor and five indoor/outdoor Deco-Turf tennis courts, and 10 indoor/outdoor HarTru clay tennis courts. This extraordinary club also features a functional training and fitness center; a sports vision training lab operated by Dr. Anne Hanna, MD, founder of Gold Coast Optometric Vision Performance; comfortable lounge areas with excellent viewing; a pro shop featuring top brands and 24-hour stringing; locker rooms with steam; a café serving healthy food, snacks and beverages; and classrooms, party rooms and meeting facilities.

In 2010, SPORTIME and tennis legend John McEnroe together launched JMTA at SPORTIME Randall's Island. The Academy is led by Managing Director, Bennett Schlansky, General Manager, Michael Ward, Directors Patrick McEnroe, who needs no introduction, and Lawrence Kleger, who has trained and coached more nationally-ranked and world-ranked juniors than anyone in the history of the USTA Eastern Section, Director of Sports Performance, Richard-John Mensing Jr. and many other world-class directors. The athletic development and tennis coaching staff comprises more than 40 experienced professionals from around the world, all selected by Johnny Mac and the SPORTIME/JMTA leadership team, who, under that team's guidance, implement the innovative and unique vision of JMTA. Faced with the challenges of COVID-19, we responded immediately with new guidelines and protocols designed to keep our players, members, guests and staff safe and healthy. To find out more, go to SportimeNY.com/Covid19_Guidelines.

SPORTIME/JMTA is proud to have developed hundreds of players who have received full or partial scholarships, or favored admissions, to top colleges and universities including, to name just a few, Wake Forest University, University of North Carolina, Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, MIT, Brown, Louisiana State University, Auburn, William and Mary, Tufts and Vanderbilt. Current pro players who train or have trained at JMTA include Christina McHale, Noah Rubin and Jamie Loeb.

In addition to world-class group training for top juniors, SPORTIME offers a wide variety of programming for players of all ages and levels, including SPORTIME Bounce for preschoolers, JMTA's trademarked Mac Red Ball and Mac Orange Ball programs for younger, developing players, and the best group programming and facilities in New York City for adult players. Also based at SPORTIME Randall's Island is the Johnny Mac Tennis Project, which provides scholarships to JMTA players and introduces the sport of tennis as a life-long health, fitness and social activity to thousands of under-resourced New York City area kids. JMTP's mission is to change young lives by removing the economic and social barriers to success through tennis.

SPORTIME TENNIS · SPORTS · FITNESS

JOHN McENROE TENNIS ACADEMY

SportimeNY.com/NYC

2021 GUIDE
TO NEW YORK TENNIS MAGAZINE'S
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USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center

Flushing Meadows Corona Park | Flushing, N.Y.
(718) 760-6200

The USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, home of the US Open Tennis Championships, is the largest public tennis facility in the world. It is, most certainly, a "Tennis Welcome Center." The Tennis Center is open to the public year-round for court rentals and offers exciting programming, as well as numerous events throughout the year.

Programs are offered for all ages and levels, as well as clinics, private lessons, leagues, tours, field trips, summer camps, corporate events, birthday parties, and tournaments. The NTC also supports all USTA Community Tennis and Player Development initiatives.

The professional staff of the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center also conducts community tennis programs, including 11 & Under Tennis for children 11 years of age and under to learn tennis in a fun and dynamic way; USTA Junior Team Tennis for youth match play; USTA League Tennis for competitive, level-of-play competition, and an official Cardio Tennis site for on-court heart-pumping fitness.

Initiatives for USTA Player Development include an Invitational USTA Competition Training Center for ranked players, Player Development programs for top-ranking juniors residing in the Northeast, and a year-round USTA Tournament Training Program for ranked juniors.

The USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis also provides for diverse community outreach programs including; the New York Junior Tennis League (NYJTL), the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation, various Community outreach events, the Queens District Attorney's Star Track/Say Yes to Tennis, No to Violence program for Queens at-risk youth.

The NTC hosts various tennis opportunities for special populations, including wheelchair tennis instruction for the physically-challenged from the months of October through July, HERO (Help Expand Recreational Opportunities) for developmentally challenged adults and tennis for autistic children through NYFAC (New York Families for Autistic Children).

There is an extensive summer camp program which provides basic tennis instruction starting as young as 11 and under up through and including Academy level players. Camps include instruction and fitness programs; the encouragement of good sportsmanship leading to general character building for the children of all ages and levels. These services are provided at a nominal cost, making it affordable for youngsters who would not otherwise get the chance to attend camp or receive tennis instruction. Lastly, the Project ACES (Alternative Classroom Environment for Students), implemented at the NTC in 2009, is geared towards children from schools from the New York City Metropolitan Area.

USTA NATIONAL TENNIS CENTER

NTC.USTA.com

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ny tennis MAGAZINE

New York Tennis Magazine

The Ultimate Guide for New York Tennis

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Junior Player spotlight

By Brian Coleman

Sebastian Sec, John McEnroe Tennis Academy

Many of us get our start in sports by looking up to an older sibling and Sebastian Sec, the top-ranked junior in New York for the Class of 2022, is no different.

Sec can recall starting to play tennis when he watched his older brother, Richard, and other family members begin playing.

"When he started playing, I got drawn into it," Sec recalls. "It wasn't forced or anything, but I watched him play and really wanted to try it. I would play with him a lot, and he was way better than me which really pushed me to try and get better. I also have older cousins who play, and I wanted to play with all of them, but I wasn't good enough at the time. That was definitely the motivating factor for me."

That drive has paid off as Sec is now one of the area's top-ranked junior players, helped out by the fact that since he was around 10 years old, Sec has been training with Lawrence Kleger at the John McEnroe Tennis Academy at SPORTIME Randall's Island.

"I just love the balance they provide," he said. "The whole coaching staff is terrific; they make time for you and do whatever they can to help you get better. I've been with Lawrence ever since I stepped foot in there, and I've never thought about the idea of changing. We work really well together... I think anyone committing to tennis full-time would have the same experience at JMTA, whether it's with Lawrence or a different coach. They help with the travel aspects of tournaments, and the facility is so nice. They have some of the best tennis coaches and athletic trainers in the world, in my opinion, so you are really getting a balanced training regimen."

While Sec would briefly play ice hockey and also oftentimes play basketball with his brothers, tennis was always at the forefront for him. Embracing the individual challenge of being a high-level tennis player has always been a crucial part of his approach, and continues to be one of his strongest attributes.

"I never had any pressure to only focus on one sport, but once I started playing tournaments, I think that's when I realized I only wanted to play tennis," he said. "I just enjoyed playing matches so much. It's an individual sport, and for better or worse, it comes down to you. I think the independence factor is something that makes it both more enjoyable but also tougher. You have to focus on every shot during a match, and that really forces you to stay in it mentally. I enjoy that part."

Kleger, the Co-Director of JMTA who has worked with numerous top juniors in New York throughout his career, says Sec has the mental toughness and determination you want to see in a player.

"I have had the privilege and pleasure of coaching Sebastian since he was 10 years old," said Kleger. "Sebe has gone through two significant injuries that kept him off the court for months at a time just when he was making good progress. Some kids in that position might quit out of frustration, but he came back from each injury more committed and more determined to reach his tennis goals. As a result, he has not only become an elite player, he has become the emotional leader of, and role model for all players at the John McEnroe Tennis Academy."

Like many other top junior players, Sec has been doing his schooling online for the last couple of years, attending Laurel Springs, to allow more time and flexibility to continue and build on his tennis training.

"Last year as I started doing well in higher-level tournaments, we discussed and ultimately decided to go fully virtual. We knew it would help me improve a lot," said Sec. "We have a group at JMTA during the day for players who do online schooling, and it just gives me more hours on with my coach, and practicing with other top players. Some are higher-ranked and some are lower-ranked than you, but being able to practice against players at your level who have different styles gives you a different look, and it pushes you to try to pass them in the rankings."

That environment continued to drive Sec and towards the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020, he began seeing the fruits of that labor with success at some high-level National tournaments, even competing on the ITF tours. But when COVID-19 hit, like many people, Sec's tournament play was put on hold, and it left him in a strange situation as he tried to figure out the best way to continue improving during the layoff.

"It was definitely mentally challenging, and I was anxious a lot of the time," he said. "Mainly because prior to COVID shutting everything down, I was playing tournaments in back-to-back-to-back weeks while traveling a good amount, and that was the first time I had really done that. I was doing pretty well at those events as well, so when everything shut down it was tough. I played with my cousins at a nearby outdoor park, but still felt off about my game. It kind of gets in your head, whether or not you can sustain the level you were at before stopping. So you had to refocus and restart in a way."

But as tournament play returned in the fall and winter, Sec has found his groove again, and started posting good results at tournaments. He was a finalist at the Eastern Super Six at Alley Pond Tennis Center in October, won the doubles title alongside Alex Karman at the Empire Cup at CourtSense Bogota, and recently reached the finals of the Grade 5 San Diego ITF event and the finals of a J5 ITF event in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Sec reached the finals at the San Jose ITF event towards the end of 2020

Match play has always been a strength of Sec's game, as he is a sound technical player who understands how to construct a point, and avoid giving his opponent any mistakes to capitalize on.

"I think I'm pretty consistent, and I try not to give anything to my opponents," he said. "I am very good defensively, and I feel like I can play any position on the court. I do want to start being able to come to the net more comfortably, and finish off points more easily. I think I dictate really well, and it's just about finishing those points off."

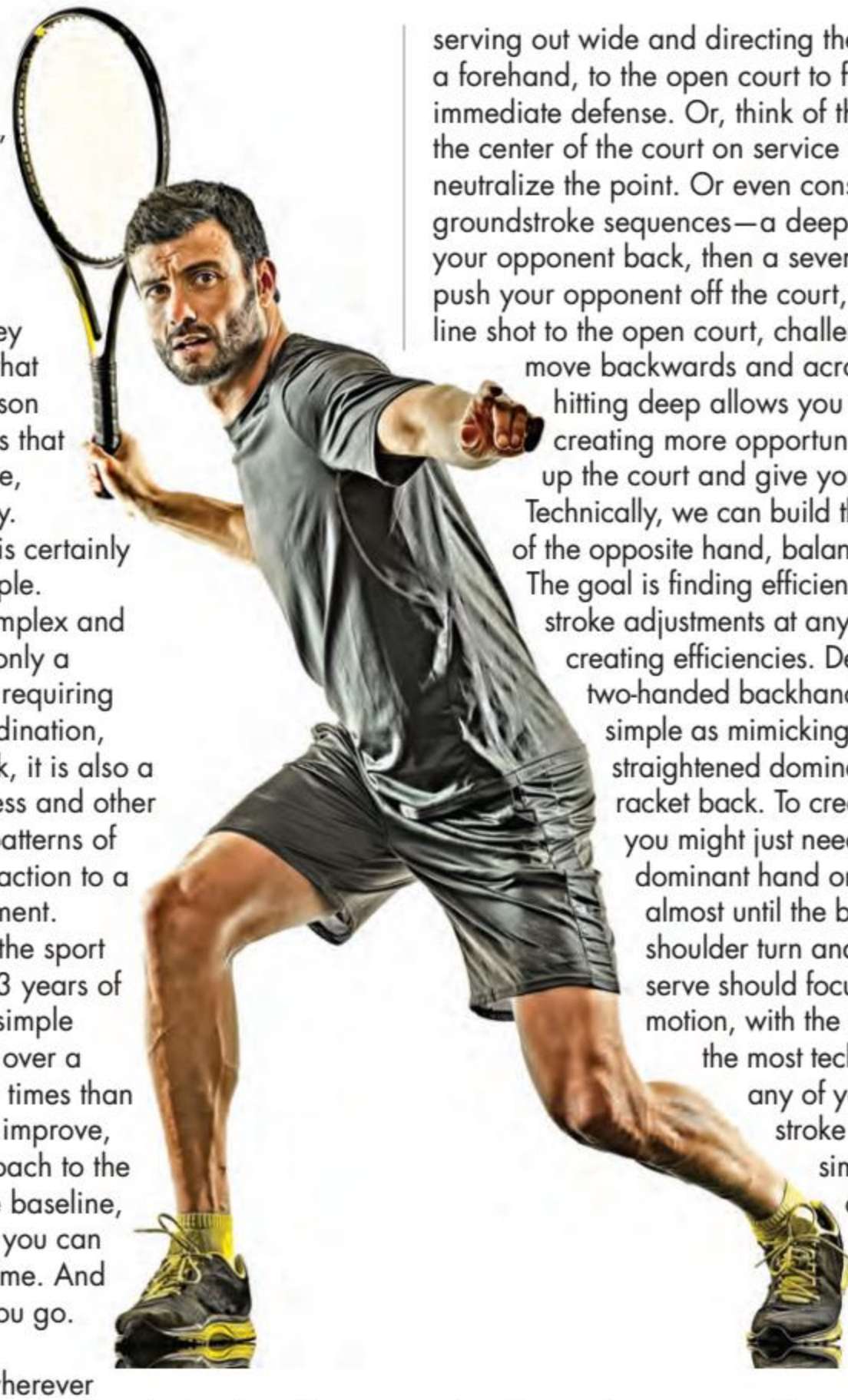
As Sec moves into the latter part of his junior season and prepares for his senior year, his goal is to play high-level Division I tennis at a school with a good balance of both academics and athletics.

"His game is very solid in all aspects and he rarely beats himself," added Kleger. "You really have to play over him to beat him. He is our most technically and tactically sound player. And every aspect of his game continues to improve. He is going to be a very tough out in college and, hopefully, beyond."

Brian Coleman is the Senior Editor for *New York Tennis Magazine*. He may be reached at brianc@usptennis.com.

Improving is Simple

By Michael Ward



Most tennis fans have probably thought at one time or another, "The pros make it look easy." Truthfully, they do make the game look easy. Of course, that's an optical illusion: Professional players work tremendously hard so that they can play the sport in a way that looks effortless. And one reason the pros are able to do that is that they have simplified the game, both technically and tactically. Improving your tennis game is certainly not always easy, but it is simple.

Granted, tennis can be complex and overwhelming. Tennis is not only a physically demanding sport, requiring high doses of hand-eye coordination, balance, agility and footwork, it is also a mentally taxing sport like chess and other games that require specific patterns of thought, preparation, and reaction to a constantly changing environment.

But with all due respect to the sport that has consumed the last 23 years of my life, tennis is a relatively simple game. You have to hit a ball over a net and inside the lines more times than your opponent does. As you improve, you develop a general approach to the game. You can play from the baseline, you can serve and volley, or you can work towards an all-court game. And you add other concepts as you go. You can adopt a Toni Nadal mentality of hitting the ball wherever your opponent isn't. Or, you can adopt Andre Agassi's mentality to be the last man standing in the boxing ring. You can use Paul Wardlaw's directional theories to determine when to hit cross-court or down the line. Tactically and technically, there are simple ways to get better.

Tactically, we can quantify the game in five dimensions: Consistency, Direction, Depth, Spin, and Power, in that order. A top performer can construct a point using these dimensions in this order. For example, take the serve plus one (or, to use a boxing metaphor, the one-two punch)—serving out wide and directing the first ball, preferably as a forehand, to the open court to force your opponent into immediate defense. Or, think of the way players aim down the center of the court on service returns, as a way to neutralize the point. Or even consider three-ball groundstroke sequences—a deep cross-court shot to push your opponent back, then a severe angle cross-court to push your opponent off the court, followed by a down-the-line shot to the open court, challenging your opponent to move backwards and across the court. Successfully hitting deep allows you to hunt for short balls, creating more opportunity for angles that open up the court and give you bigger targets.

Technically, we can build the game on footwork, use of the opposite hand, balance, contact, and timing. The goal is finding efficiencies. As a general rule, stroke adjustments at any age should be based on creating efficiencies. Developing a consistent two-handed backhand, for example, can be as simple as mimicking Novak Djokovic's straightened dominant arm as he takes the racket back. To create a stronger forehand, you might just need to keep the non-dominant hand on the throat of the racket, almost until the ball bounces, to nurture shoulder turn and stability. A more reliable serve should focus on a natural throwing motion, with the palm facing down. To get the most technical improvement in any of your strokes, break the stroke down and work towards simplifying it—always with an eye on proper footwork, use of the opposite hand, balance, contact and timing.

While improvement takes time and practice, and may not always be easy, it certainly should be simple. Focus on technical and tactical efficiencies, and remember … simple, not easy.

Michael Ward is the General Manager of Sportime Randall's Island and John McEnroe Tennis Academy. Ward graduated from Mississippi College in 2007 where he was named a National ITA Scholar Athlete and All-Conference selection. After spending five years in finance, he returned to tennis as the Tennis Director of the Anguilla Tennis Academy in the British West Indies. He joined Sportime and JMTA in 2016.

Round Hill Hotel & Villas is an award-winning, historic resort nestled on a 110-acre peninsula just west of Montego Bay, Jamaica. Boasting a guest list of world leaders, cultural icons and Hollywood A-listers, this classic resort continues to attract a jet-set from around the world who enjoy timeless glamour and understated luxury along with pristine natural beaches and the inimitable Caribbean waters. Award-winning accommodations include 36 Ralph Lauren-designed oceanfront guestrooms, 96 luxurious villa rooms and suites, or a selection of 27 private 2 - 6-bedroom Villas – most with private pools. Other highlights include open-air terrace dining and The Grill at Round Hill, rousing family programs and a dedicated Pineapple Kid's Club, an infinity pool, and a world-class, award-winning Elemis spa located in a beautifully restored 18th century plantation house.

Round Hill Hotel and Villas

MONTEGO BAY, JAMAICA

Round Hill
A Jamaican Tennis Destination

One of the few Jamaica hotels with multiple tennis courts, enthusiasts can balance leisure amenities with rousing match play on one of Round Hill's five tennis courts, including three Har-Tru green clay courts. Not just for day use, two courts are lit for exhilarating nighttime matches. Round Hill's tennis center offers racquets for daily use, in-house professionals to provide lessons for adults and children, and leisure or tournament play with other guests. To enhance the on-property tennis experience, guests may opt for the Stay & Play Tennis package, which is designed to maximize time on-court throughout their stay. Inclusive of lessons, balls, unlimited court use, and use of racquets, mixed with additional relaxing resort amenities, the package provides the ideal resort experience for anyone seeking to perfect their game or simply enjoy some free-spirited play.

Guests can also enjoy a set of new luxury experiences and partnerships created for travelers' privacy and comfort, and with new safety and social distancing protocols in place. The Villa Retreat package offers premium accommodations in one of the resort's award-winning private villas coupled with special in-villa amenities to limit face-to-face interactions and enhance safety. In response to the demand for private travel, Round Hill unveiled an exciting new partnership with evoJets, one of the most trusted names in private travel. As part of this partnership, the Ultimate Private Luxury in Jamaica package includes round trip private charted flights by evoJets, luxury accommodation, and private chef led tours and dining, as well as additional VIP amenities.

Book a stay with Round Hill at www.roundhill.com.

2020 Year

As we turn our attention to 2021, I doubt there is anyone who is eager to look back at 2020; it has certainly been a year most of us want to forget.

The tennis tours were halted for a significant amount of time during the summer, but did return in the fall with a number of events, including the U.S. and French Opens. For the first time since World War II, the Wimbledon Championships in England weren't played, and the French Open was moved from May to September.

Before looking ahead to 2021, we recap the year that was 2020 in the tennis world:

2020 Grand Slams

Australian Open

Photo Credit: Getty Images

Dates: January 20-February 2
Location: Melbourne, Australia

Results
Men's Singles: Novak Djokovic defeated Dominic Thiem 6-4, 4-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4
Women's Singles: Sofia Kenin defeated Garbiñe Muguruza 4-6, 6-2, 6-2
Men's Doubles: Joe Salisbury and Rajeev Ram defeated Luke Saville and Max Purcell 6-4, 6-2
Women's Doubles: Kristina Mladenovic and Timea Babos defeated Su-Wei Hsieh and Barbora Strycova 6-2, 6-1
Mixed Doubles: Nicola Mekti and Barbora Krejcikova defeated Jamie Murray and Bethanie Mattek-Sands 5-7, 6-4, 10-1

U.S. Open

Photo Credit: USTA/Pete Staples

Dates: August 31- September 13
Location: Flushing, New York

Results
Men's Singles: Dominic Thiem defeated Alexander Zverev 2-6, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 7-6
Women's Singles: Naomi Osaka defeated Victoria Azarenka 1-6, 6-3, 6-3
Men's Doubles: Mate Pavic and Bruno Soares defeated Wesley Kohof and Nikola Mektic 7-5, 6-3
Women's Doubles: Laura Siegemund and Vera Zvonareva defeated Nicole Melichar and Xu Yifan 6-4, 6-4

French Open

Photo Credit: Corinne Dubreuil/FFT

Dates: September 21-October 11
Location: Paris, France

in Review

By Emilie Katz

Results

Men's Singles: Rafael Nadal defeated Novak Djokovic 6-3, 6-2, 7-5
Women's Singles: Iga Swiatek defeated Sofia Kenin 6-4, 6-1
Men's Doubles: Andreas Mies and Kevin Krawietz defeated Mate Pavic and Bruno Soares 6-3, 7-5
Women's Doubles: Kristina Mladenovic and Timea Babos defeated Alexa Guarachi and Desirae Krawczyk 6-4, 7-5

2020 Year End Award Winners

WTA

WTA Player of the Year: Sofia Kenin

Kenin captured her first Grand Slam title at the Australian Open this year. She went on to advance to her second Grand Slam final at Roland Garros. She finished the year at a career high ranking of number four on the WTA tour.

WTA Doubles Team of the Year: Kristina Mladenovic/Timea Babos

The duo captured two Grand Slam titles this season, first at the Australian Open and next at Roland Garros.

WTA Most Improved Player of the Year: Iga Swiatek

Photo Credit: Corinne Dubreuil/FFT

Swiatek captured her first title on the WTA tour at the French Open. By doing this she became the first polish player to ever win a Grand Slam title. The 19 year old finished the season at a career high ranking of number 17.

WTA Newcomer of the Year: Nadia Podoroska

Podoroska started the 2020 season ranked outside the top

continued on page 54

2020 year in review

continued from page 53

250. She advanced to her first career tour level semifinal at the French Open before falling to the eventual champion. Prior to Paris she never won a Grand Slam match or beaten a top 50 ranked opponent. She ended the season ranked number 48 on the tour.

Karen Krantzcke Sportsmanship Award: Marie Bouzkova

Marie Bouzkova from the Czech Republic earns her first Karen Krantzcke sportsmanship award which is voted on by her peers on tour. This award is presented to the player who conducts herself in a manner fitting of a professional sports figure and observes the rules of fair play, shows respect for others and is gracious on and off the court.

Peachy Kellmeyer Player Service Award: WTA Players' Council

This year's Peachy Kellmeyer Player Service Award, which is also voted on by the players, is awarded to all 10 players that served on the WTA Players' Council during the 2020 season: Kristie Ahn, Gabriela Dabrowski, Madison Keys, Johanna Konta, Aleksandra Krunic, Christina McHale, Kristina Mladenovic, Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, Sloane Stephens and Donna Vekic.

The group has worked countless hours to help the Tour return safely and successfully during the unprecedented 2020 season.

WTA Coach of the Year: Piotr Sierzputowski

Piotr Sierzputowski, coach of Iga Swiatek was honored with the WTA Coach of the Year Award. This award recognizes the winning coach for not only success on the court, but for serving as an ambassador of tennis and bringing coaching to the forefront of the game.

Sierzputowski began coaching Swiatek in 2016 while she was competing on the Junior Circuit. He helped develop her game from juniors to the professional level and lead her to a junior Wimbledon title in 2018. He also had a huge impact on her French Open Title this year.

2020 WTA Retirements

Caroline Wozniacki

In 2019, Wozniacki announced that the 2020 Australian Open would be her final tournament, and she would retire from professional tennis in order to spend more time with her family.

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American Tennis' New Star
Dominant Djokovic

Although she retired ranked 37 in the WTA rankings, Wozniacki had previously held the No. 1 spot for 71 weeks after first reaching the top spot in 2010. She also appeared in three Olympics, representing Denmark in the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games. In 2018, she finally secured her first and only Grand Slam title at the Australian Open after appearing in 43 Grand Slam tournaments and three major finals throughout her career.

Ekaterina Makarova

Ekaterina Makarova officially announced her retirement from professional tennis in January of this year nearly a year after her previous appearance on tour.

Reaching a career-high singles ranking of number 8 in the world in 2015, Makarova reached the singles semifinals at the 2014 US Open and the 2015 Australian Open. Makarova is also a three-time Grand Slam champion and Rio Olympics gold medalist in doubles. She reached the doubles World No.1 ranking with compatriot Elena Vesnina in 2018, and held it for five weeks.

Maria Sharapova

Maria Sharapova turned professional in 2001 at the age of 14. She reached the world No. 1 ranking for the first time in 2005, at the age of 18, becoming the first Russian female tennis player to top the singles rankings. She won five Grand Slam titles: two at the French Open and one each at the Australian Open, Wimbledon, and the US Open. She also won the year-end WTA Finals in her debut in 2004. Sharapova called it quits on her highly successful career in February after enduring a persistent shoulder Injury.

Jessica Moore

Jessica Moore announced her retirement at this years Australian Open. She is a two-time WTA title winner in doubles. Moore reached 5 WTA finals in doubles and her highest ranking was 52 in the world.

Johanna Larsson

Johanna Larsson announced her retirement in February of this year. The Swede reached a career high singles ranking of 45 in the world. Additionally, she achieved success on the doubles court as a top 20 player, with a run to the semifinals at the 2019 French Open.

Rika Fujiwara

Rika Fujiwara announced her retirement in March having reached a career high ranking of 84 in singles and 13 in doubles on the WTA tour. She reached six WTA doubles finals, winning one and also reached the doubles semifinals of the 2002 French Open.

Julia Georges

Julia Goerges announced her retirement in October ending a 15-year career. The German reached her highest ranking of 9th in the world in 2018 and was ranked 45th at her retirement.

Goerges reached the Wimbledon semifinals in 2018 before losing in straight sets to Serena Williams. She was runner-up in mixed doubles at the French Open in 2014 alongside Nenad Zimonjic and was a finalist in the Fed Cup with Germany in 2014.

ATP Retirements

Bob and Mike Bryan

The Americans were the most accomplished men's doubles team of all time, capturing a record 16 Grand Slam men's doubles titles together, including 5 US Opens.

The pair will officially exit on a winning note having successfully defended their title at the Delray Beach Open and helping the U.S. qualify for the Davis Cup Finals in Hawaii before the COVID-19 pandemic forced the tennis tours to shut down for five months.

Now 42, the Bryans finish their careers with more than 1100 wins together, 119 titles and an Olympic gold medal. Their first Grand Slam title came at the 2003 French Open and they completed a career Grand Slam just three years later at Wimbledon.

Santiago Giraldo

Santiago Giraldo retired October 16 following a 16 year run on the ATP Tour. Throughout his career He claimed 168 tour-level wins. The Colombian, who rose to a career-high No. 28 in the ATP Rankings also captured 10 ATP Challenger Tour trophies.

Steve Darcis

After 16 years on Tour, Steve Darcis is bringing is career to a close. The 5'9" Belgian captured two ATP Tour crowns during his 17-year professional career. Darcis enjoyed a breakout year in 2017, reaching a career-high of No. 38 in the ATP Rankings, but was forced to miss the 2018 season due to an elbow injury. He returned January of 2019 and recorded his first ATP Tour semi-final in seven years at his first tournament back.

The Tennis Guru: Yin's Dream

By Dr. Tom Ferraro

This is the seventh installment of Dr. Tom Ferraro's "The Tennis Guru" series. To read the first parts, visit www.LITennisMag.com.

Immediately upon repeating the magic words "TIMIN" three times, Yin fell into a deep sleep and just as Rebecca had told him, he found himself in a vivid dream. He was walking out of a parking lot towards the magnificently domed All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club, home of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships. Apparently, he was one of the players competing. He looked down at his clothing and he saw he was all in white and carrying his tennis bag filled with rackets, bottled water, sneakers and tape. He walked towards the player's entrance and two gatekeepers opened the doors for him to enter, giving evidence that they knew and respected him.

They both bowed and said, "Good morning sir, best of luck today."

He found his way to the locker room and sat down in front of a locker with his name on it. As he was putting on his sneakers he looked up and saw Roger Federer walk in wearing his white, uber-cool UNIQLO outfit with red head and wrist bands.

Federer winked at him and said, "Hey Yin, good luck today. Let's have a good match. And please, no temper tantrums."

Yin was baffled by all this and next he heard an official walk into the locker room and announce, "Gentleman, it is time to play your match. Please follow me."

Roger led the way, and as he walked onto center court he was greeted with a roar from the crowd as they set eyes on their beloved champion. When Yin entered, he heard but a smattering of applause and some snickers.

He looked up to the stands and in amazement he saw a young John McEnroe with red curly hair and red headband. Seated right next to him was Bjorn Borg with his flowing main of blond hair looking like a rock star. Next to him were the Williams sisters and then came Andre Agassi, and Jimmy Connors. They all were shouting to Roger, bantering and seemed to be cheering Roger on which made Yin feel even more invisible than before. Roger just looked up at them and smiled.

Before you knew it, the match got under way and was tied at two-sets all with Yin serving at four-all in the final set. Victory was now in sight, but Yin proceeded to double fault four times and walked in shame and rage to his chair as they switched sides. He heard more laughs from the crowd and he lost control, smashing a water bottle at his feet. With this the crowd started to boo him, which infuriated him even more, and he took his racket and gauged a large chunk of turf out of the ground and then broke his racket over his knee. With the crowd became silent and the referee said, "One more outburst and you will be disqualified, sir."

Yin returned to his seat and heard the booing get louder. He was about to walk off the court and then he turned toward the people seated in the player's box and saw Rebecca smiling at him and sending him a feeling of warmth and safety. Suddenly, his rage and shame were replaced by calmness, confidence and cool.

With that he rose from his chair like a new man and proceeded to break Federer in the next game to even the set at five-all, and then won his service game and the tiebreaker to win the Men's finals.

As the applause mounted he turned to Rebecca, ran over to the player's box and climbed the wall to embrace her as he had seen so many champions do. As he hugged Rebecca she whispered in his ear, "So now you know the magic power of love. Never forget this moment Yin."

And then she kissed him on the forehead and her lips burned his skin, leaving a small scar that would come to intimidate all opponents who faced him thereafter.

He awoke from the dream and looked up into Rebecca's eyes as she bent down and kissed him on the forehead. She told him to keep silent about the dream and that its mark would never leave his soul and would become his secret weapon.

Yin asked Rebecca:

"How does all this work?"

She smiled at him and said, "In time you will see what this means. Be patient Yin and now let us proceed up the mountain."

To be continued…

For consultations, treatment or on-site visits, contact Dr. Tom Ferraro Ph.D., Sport Psychologist, by phone at (516) 248-7189, e-mail DrTFerraro@aol.com or visit DrTomFerraro.com.

Metro Corporate League Recap

Presented by Advantage Tennis Clubs

The 2020 Fall Metro Corporate League was put on hold briefly towards the end of the year as the major snow storm delayed the end-of-season parties and finals for each of the league's divisions. The finals are held at Roosevelt Island Racquet Club and feature the top two teams from each division facing off against one another.

Below are the most up-to-date standings, with the team's total points, for the Fall 2020 season, with the finals scheduled to take place sometime in January. Look for a full season recap in the March/April issue of *New York Tennis Magazine*.

Advanced Division
Proskauer Rose (206)
BNP Paribas (179)

Advanced Intermediate
Douglas Elliman (150)
Deutsche Bank (A) (147)
Société Générale (122)
Deutsche Bank (S) (82)

Intermediate
Brown Harris Stevens (175)
BNP Paribas (166)
Douglas Elliman (164)
Société Générale (131)

For more information on the Corporate League, the upcoming finals and future leagues, contact Luis Espinoza at Luis@MetroTennis.com, or visit www.MetroTennis.com. The Winter League is slated to begin in mid-February.

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The Journey Back Home:

Never Too Late to Become a Better Player or Coach

By Lonnie Mitchel

Dominating the news the last 10 months is the COVID-19 pandemic and a hotly-contested presidential election.

For many, tennis is our passion and the sport we love has been affected. My coaching at SUNY Oneonta for both men and women has been put on hiatus with the hope we can get back to on-court training in March. In the meantime, I wait. I also spend time teaching online business and coaching technique classes at the college. I keep in touch with my collegiate players engaging them the best I can in what has been a very long and frustrating off-season. My love of our game never diminishes while I wait for collegiate tennis to begin again. The vaccines cannot come fast enough for me.

My father once said to me, in his role as a high school science teacher, a practicing Doctor of Optometry and teaching at the SUNY School of Optometry, "you will never stop learning and your students will never stop teaching you; you will learn more from your pupils than they might teach you."

So fast forward to the present and I am back on Long Island and my phone rings. It's my former club where I once hung my tennis coaching hat for 25+ years, and they need my help in teaching some junior classes and adult learn and play groups. Like the old show that was on in the 1970's and early 80's, Welcome Back Kotter, I returned to my old stomping grounds ready to teach lessons again, doing something I love and making a few extra dollars while being on a tennis court with students and coaching. It's extraordinary. Some old faces and new ones but it's COVID and you just never know when a skill can be put to use. I am reminded that it's never too late to hone one's skills in tennis; I learned that during the past nine years of coaching high level collegiate players, which has challenged me in ways that I never thought. Their level of play, the backgrounds they come from and all learning from different teachers and coaches throughout the country have resonated with me. My father was right, and in that collegiate environment, that high level of play challenged me to be a better teacher. I am able to see things differently. Unknowingly, I sharpened my teaching tools and grew my knowledge of the game in the modern era bridging the great mentors I had in the 70's and 80's with idols like Rod Laver and Chris Evert, to the hard-hitting style of Roger Federer and Serena Williams in today's game. Two styles of play, two eras of tennis and so much knowledge in my pocket.

All too often, collegiate players think they know better because they trained with coaches that they trusted during their informative years. Now they encounter another coach in a collegiate environment who is trying to understand their mentality, their style of game and what makes them tick. I say to them, often tongue and cheek, "What do I know?" My students laugh but I think I make the point. My approach to the game changes with every player on a collegiate squad considering their varying playing styles and knowing that the players have to

evolve and find commonality in a team environment.

I did not realize it until I got back to coaching locally that my brain was stimulated with vigor and energy going to another level. I was better equipped to tackle the local lessons in a grassroots environment and provide the lessons of what collegiate players have taught me to advance the more recreational player in a club environment. The excitement of the recreational player, who is not taxed to perform well in school and after a long day drudging to practice and have me challenge them, was refreshing. They pay their hard-earned money to get these lessons and I am going to provide that value the best I can. That recreational player has given me the lesson (they thought I was teaching them) that they seem to appreciate the lessons more now because the tennis environment was abruptly taken away during the spring when tennis clubs and parks were closed due to the pandemic. In addition, USTA tournaments were cancelled and competition was at a standstill until summer. I want to bring those lessons of appreciation back to the collegiate environment as soon as the powers that be say we can. I cannot wait to share the words that some of my mentors have told me in my early years on the court: this is a privilege. I am reminded of that now more than ever that you can grow your tennis knowledge all the time. That the book of knowledge never ends and the next chapter is written every time one walks on the court.

I am hoping that the some parents, other teachers and lots of juniors read this. My father also said to me, "You don't know anything but rather each day was an opportunity to expand the knowledge you had". And I do not know who wrote or said this, so I cannot take credit for it, but, "Wisdom is not a product of just schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it and to attain knowledge, add things every day."

True in tennis, true in life.

Tennis reminded me of these great lessons that we all can learn from just by returning to the grassroots courts. I thank those students who continue to provide me the knowledge to be a better coach every day.

Lonnie Mitchel is head Men's and Women's Tennis coach at SUNY Oneonta. Lonnie was named an assistant coach to Team USA for the 2013 Maccabiah Games in Israel for the Grand Master Tennis Division. Also coached for Team USA in Berlin and Chile in 2015 and Team USA Maccabiah for the Open Division working with Division I players and professionally ranked in the Israel Games in 2017. Was also named "Coach of the Year" in 2015 for State University of NY Athletic Conference. He may be reached by phone at (516) 414-7202 or e-mail LonnieMitchel@yahoo.com.

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Perception in Tennis

By Saul Salazar

Tennis is a very tough game. In addition to having very good technique, you also need to possess skills in these three areas:

- Mental: You must be resilient and positive.
- Physical: You need to be fast, strong and with good stamina.
- Tactical: You must make the right decisions in very limited time frames.

Through my years as a tennis coach, I have seen a lot of mistakes in decision-making because the player is not aware of their opponent. This is called "perception."

What does perception mean?

"Perception" means that after each contact with the ball, you must know how good or how bad your shot was, how your opponent reaches the ball, and what kind of shot you can expect in return. With good perception, you can get to the best position on the court, you can make the best decision and can move and adjust better because you already know/anticipate how the ball is coming. Taking these initial steps, you can hit the ball cleaner and on time, helping to send the ball back with better quality.

One clear example of perception is when you are playing a point and …

1. You hit the ball to make your opponent run deep to their backhand;
2. Your opponent reaches the ball and is very off-balance and you are aware of this;
3. You move forward;
4. They are looking for time, sending the ball high; and
5. You make a fast move to the open court, taking the ball early, depending on how deep and high the shot was.

Now, I am going to mention some drills that are going to help you improve your perception. These drills can be performed with two players, in private lessons, or with a coach and two students:

1. Two players forehand cross-court, one of them opens or closes his non-dominant hand on purpose and the other player needs to watch and say if the hand is open or closed (one of them is lefty the drill is down the line forehand).
2. Two players are hitting forehands or backhands, one of them is hitting with variation, top spin, slice or flat and the other needs to read it and say it louder as soon as he sees the opponent preparing for his/her shot.
3. Two players are competing on the whole court, one of them is simulating a situation, it can be neutral, defense or attack, while the other player needs to take the best position on the court and make the best decision. If you are the coach and are working with two students, feed balls from one side asking the student to move together with you. Then feed the ball and play the point.
4. Choose any competition drill. One player needs to say "yes" when they can make their opponent lose their balance. You, as a coach, must check their position on the court and their decision.

Hopefully, this advice about "perception" will help you improve your game.

Saul Salazar is the Director of High Performance Director of CourtSense Tennis Academy at Bogota Racquet Club. Saul has been coaching tennis for more than 30 years, and was critical in the development of many top national players in Mexico. As Director of a prominent tennis academy in Mexico, Saul was known for his skill and ability to rejuvenate deteriorating clubs throughout Monterrey. Also serving as USPTR Head Pro, Saul's experience has made him a vital component to the development of CourtSense Academy.

New Year! New Strings?

By Barbara Wyatt

"That's exactly what I need!" Brandon said, after I told him I am picking up racquets with new strings. He plays four times a week and known for an aggressive style with powerful cross-court shots hit with his forehand. Yet, he hadn't re-strung his racquet in over a year.

I know exactly who he needs to meet.

"Let me introduce you to Marjorie, my racquet technician," I said before stepping aside.

Brandon handed Marjorie his racquet. Her eyes flew from top to bottom of the entire racquet. She punched the strings with the heel of her palm and listened. She lightly pulled on the strings as she examined their condition, wear pattern, gauge, and brand.

"You're using a 17-gauge string, does that work for you?"

"I guess so. Sure," Brandon said.

This was Brandon's problem. He was passionate about his technique, but not thorough enough to understand how much a carefully selected racquet and strings can enhance his game.

Marjorie asked some routine questions:

"How often do you play?"

"What level do you play?"

"Do you break strings? If so, how often?"

"Do you have any arm injuries?"

"Have you requested a certain tension? If so, which tension?"

"Is there anything you'd like to improve performance-wise?"

He raised his eyebrows in surprise. "Could new strings help?"

The corners of her mouth raised slightly, and she said, "Let's try." She winked at me.

"I can't seem to hit the ball deep enough consistently," Brandon said. "No matter how hard I swing, the ball lands short."

"One thing I've noticed is that the string you're using is stiff," responded Marjorie. "We could talk about switching to a more elastic string that will help to get more depth."

"Sold!" Brandon said.

"That's one possibility," she said. "Your returns may be falling short because of the stiff tension, or your racquet may be too heavy, or has too dense of a pattern."

"Prepare to be amazed," I whispered to Brandon. "Marjorie's an MRT, Master Racquet Technician."

The United States Racquet Stringers Association (USRSA) provides stringing certifications, including MRT, the highest level. Their members study the differences in racquets and strings and how they interact with a player's game.

"It pains me to see players using frames that are too heavy, too light, wrong head size, or even grip size," Marjorie said. "Players will spend hundreds of dollars on shoes that fit, then slog through elbow or wrist pain and consider surgery, without restringing their racquet with strings with a soft coating (to absorb vibrations) or a heavier racquet (to vibrate less). Within a few stringing sessions, I can show a client how their equipment can affect power, maneuverability, spin potential and comfort."

The USRSA website, www.racquettech.com, provides a list of certified stringers.

Barbara Wyatt is a writer, photographer, USTA official, and mobile app developer of iKnowTennis!, the tennis rules app. Her poem, Ode to Tennis, an amusing poem on the joys and frustrations when learning tennis, is available at Amazon. She can be reached by e-mail at BarbaraW@iKnowTennis.com.

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Course Correction

Mental Training During the Coronavirus

By Rob Polishook

Like many of you, I wonder how things will get back to normal post the COVID-19 crisis. The last nine months have definitely been unprecedented. Fortunately, vaccines are now being distributed to health care workers and in months the general population. So, what can tournament tennis players do in the meantime?

My hope is that this sports "pause" has and will allow athletes the time to step back. What if, in some way, this pandemic has a silver lining: we have an opportunity for a "course correction" in how athletes approach their sport? The correction doesn't necessarily have to be drastic, though it will have a positive impact on your performance.

As tennis players, we are always pushing to improve technique, struggling to get stronger, forcing ourselves to be more fit, and working to reach another level. If we are honest with ourselves, we don't spend enough time re-centering and taking care of our emotional well-being. So often, when we get anxious or frustrated, we run from the present moment. When we are unhappy with an outcome or a score, we self-medicate by physically working harder, forcing more, and ultimately grinding ourselves to exhaustion.

We've all been there! But what if this approach is not the answer? Maybe the lesson here is to notice our fearful thoughts about not being good enough, or our anxiety about not reaching our goals, and instead reset by breathing, being in the present moment and focusing on what we can control.

Now with the New Year (2021) upon us, it is the perfect time to reflect and evaluate how you approach your training for the coming year. In addition to focusing on the physical, dedicate real time, effort and thought to the important mental/emotional side of who you are, what motivates you and how you play. Only then will you really experience true balance and perspective to go forward with passion and purpose.

Billie Jean King shared her thoughts about the pandemic during a CNN interview with Christiane Amanpour and Andy Murray, she said "It's a great time to meditate…and also think about what it means to be the best you can be…I think the greatest players in the world, it doesn't matter what generation are the strongest emotionally. It's also really important to have reflection time… You've got to come out of this [pandemic] and it's going to be different, and you have to adapt."

The following are 10 ideas that can help you with your mental edge. Think of this list as a menu, choose what resonates with you. Use these mental and emotional course corrections to slow down, go inside, and become more aware.

1. Meditate. Breathe.
2. Make time to decide what you're grateful for.
3. Practice solo: shadow stroke, wall, games.
4. Be curious: read, watch videos, explore.
5. Take a walk or run outside.
6. Play with your pet. They are always present.
7. Hang with your arms from a tree, do yoga, or stretch.
8. Connect with family, friends and supporters.

9. Get more sleep and make healthy food choices.
10. Journal, write, draw, sing or create music.

Here's an example of a course correction: I was watching the news and feeling more and more anxious (which is what many athletes are feeling about their game right now) and my dog, Gumbo, sensing my energy, was barking non-stop, wanting my attention. I ignored her at first, then I picked her up and she settled in my arms like mush (see the sixth idea above). This in turn allowed me to settle down and turn the TV off! I then begin this article. Taking a pause actually allows us the space to move forward.

To make progress as athletes, we need to step away from the noise, re-center, and reconnect with ourselves. Doing this has an added advantage as it allows us to see that sport isn't your entire identity. Sports are what you do, not who you are. You are a whole human athlete, a person first with heart, energy, and spirit. Paradoxically, you'll find bringing this balance to your game will give you the mental edge, often the difference between winning and losing.

> "If we are honest with ourselves, we don't spend enough time re-centering and taking care of our emotional well-being."

Rob Polishook, MA, CPC is the founder of Inside the Zone Sports Performance Group. As a mental training coach, he works with the whole human athlete helping them to unleash their mental edge (heart.energy.spirit) through mindfulness, somatic psychology, animal wisdom and mental training skills. Rob is author of 2 best-selling books: Tennis Inside the Zone and Baseball Inside the Zone: Mental Training Workouts for Champions. He can be reached by phone at (973) 723-0314, by e-mail rob@insidethezone.com, by visiting insidethezone.com, following on Instagram @insidethezone

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court 6

New York Tennis Magazine's Gossip Column

By Emilie Katz

Ralph Lauren Named Official Outfitter of Australian Open

Ralph Lauren has been named Official Outfitter of the Australian Open and will outfit all on-court officials, including the AO ballkids and chair umpires, in a specially-designed collection of apparel and accessories.

"We are delighted to welcome Ralph Lauren to the Australian Open family and proud to partner with this prestigious global brand who have a role in some of the world's biggest sporting events," said Australian Open Tournament Director Craig Tiley.

Sharapova Announces Engagement

Former tennis star Maria Sharapova announced her engagement to British businessman Alexander Gilkes. The five-time Grand Slam champion went public with their romance in 2018, and revealed the engagement on Instagram.

Querrey Handed Suspended Fine for Protocol Breach

American Sam Querrey opened up recently regarding his breach of protocols at the St. Petersburg Open last year, leaving the tournament following a positive COVID-19 test result. Querrey initially faced a potential $100,000 fine and a lengthy suspension. After its investigation, the ATP gave Querrey a suspended fine of $20,000, on the conditions he has "no further breaches of health and safety protocols related to COVID-19 within a probationary six-month period."

"In my opinion, we didn't really put anyone in danger, we kept to ourselves, we had two masks on; we did everything we possibly could in that journey to minimize exposure to anyone, and frankly, I think we did a great job," Querrey said.

Osaka Named SI's Sportsperson of the Year

U.S. Open champion Naoimi Osaka was named one of the winners of Sports Illustrated's Sportsperson of the Year honor for her public speaking of racial injustice in the United States.

"At 23, Naomi has become a force on the tennis court, winning the U.S. Open in September for the second time, coming back from a set down to beat Victoria Azarenka," wrote Martina Navratilova, who penned the article in Sports Illustrated. "But in 2020 she also became a huge force off the court. Naomi came to understand the power of fame and learned how to use it for the greater good. How cool is that? She used her platform to raise awareness of violence against Black Americans by the police and others and to foster the conversation about how to combat it."

Tennis Participation Up in 2020

Tennis saw an uptick in participation in 2020 as the global pandemic forced a lot of people to consider other forms of activity due to social distancing guidelines, and tennis is the ideal activity under these conditions. The Tennis Industry Association (TIA) quarterly census revealed that the third quarter, between July-September, saw 40.9 percent increase in shipments of youth racquets, and a 43.3 percent increase in adult racquets, compared to that same time period in 2019. Also, the Physical Activity Council reported that more than 10 percent of the population was playing tennis during that period, compared to 6.75 percent during that period in 2019.

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